Arthur Eckstein · Edward Ericson Jr. · Paul Hollander · J. Enoch Powell

# CHRONICLES OF CULTURE

NOVEMBER 1985 $1.50

# M·A·R·X·I·S·M

## a dying god

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHRONICLES OF
CULTURE

Vol. 9, No. 11 November 1985

MARXISM:
A DYING GOD

A Publication of
The Rockford Institute:
John A. Howard, President

Editor
*Thomas Fleming*

Associate Editor
*Bryce Christensen*

Copy Editor
*Cynthia Calvert*

Contributing Editors
*Ronald Berman*
*Harold O.J. Brown*
*Odie Faulk*
*E. Christian Kopff*
*John Shelton Reed*
*Joseph Schwartz*
*Gary Vasilash*

Editorial Secretary
*LeAnn Manning*

Publisher
*Richard A. Vaughan*

Art Director and
Production Manager
*Barbara De Witz*

Composition Manager
*Anita Fedora*

Subscription Manager
*Theresa Domanski*

On the Cover

Cover illustration and illustrations throughout the text by Anna Mycek-Wodecki.

*CHRONICLES OF CULTURE* (ISSN 0163-1187) is published monthly for $18 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *CHRONICLES OF CULTURE*, P.O. Box 800, Rockford, IL 61105.

Editorial and Advertising Offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103. Editorial phone: (815) 964-5054. Advertising phone: (815) 964-5811.

Copyright © 1985 by The Rockford Institute. All rights reserved.

# CONTENTS

## PERSPECTIVE

La Vie en Rouge 4

Big Bill Haywood and Norman Thomas were red-white-and-blue radicals—unlike the neo-Puritans who turned to burning flags when they ran out of witches.

by Thomas Fleming

## OPINIONS

Marxism and Its Guardian 6

—Thomas Sowell: *Marxism: Philosophy and Economics*
—Michael Voslensky: *Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class*

Crimean villas, private limousines, exclusive schooling, and clear consciences are all enjoyed by the Soviet Union's equaller-than-thou elite.

by Paul Hollander

The Mystery of Arthur Koestler 8

—Arthur Koestler: *Arrow in the Blue: The First Volume of an Autobiography: 1905-31*
—Arthur Koestler: *The Invisible Writing: The Second Volume of an Autobiography: 1932-40*
—Arthur and Cynthia Koestler: *Stranger on the Square*

The author of *Darkness at Noon* needed a worldwide earthquake to jar him out of cloistered hedonism and into political writing.

by Arthur M. Eckstein

A Survivor . . . So Far 13

—Arkady Shevchenko: *Breaking With Moscow*

Arkady Shevchenko is the latest defector to escape Soviet tyranny only to run the gauntlet of hostile American journalists and reviewers.

by Michael Warder

Marxism & Motorcycle Maintenance 18

—Irving Louis Horowitz: *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*

As prophet of the New Left, C. Wright Mills chased the future even more feverishly than he pursued his female graduate students.

by Thomas L. Ashton



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Time and the Cross 19

—George A. Kennedy: *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*
—Ramsay MacMullen: *Christianizing the Roman Empire*

The truths of Christianity will endure "world without end," but biblical scholars and church historians still need to check their calendars.

by J. Enoch Powell

## VIEWS

Solzhenitsyn and Democracy 22

Solzhenitsyn has frequently been attacked as "antidemocratic." Another interpretation of his own words would clear him of the charge and put the accusers in the docket.

by Edward E. Ericson Jr.

Russia's Bloody Gold 28

The Nazis would have marveled at the efficiency with which Soviet leaders (and American collaborators) coaxed gold out of their huge mines by filling them with bodies.

by Wladyslaw John Cieslewicz

## CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Washington by William L. Armstrong 40
Letter From the Lower Right by John Shelton Reed 41

## CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

Pornography, homosexuality, and grief all used to be private affairs—that is until Federal judges, the national media, university administrators, and Bill Buckley started looking into the closets. 42

## TYPEFACES

Black and White—and Red All Over 44
The technology of Soviet magazines is yesterday's papers, but their version of events in Afghanistan or Poland is newer than tomorrow.

## VITAL SIGNS

### ART

The Celebration of Chagall by Shehbaz H. Safrani 45

## BOOKSHELVES

### COMMENDABLES

Behind the Pogonias: Brian Murray on *Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered* 34
A Vibrant Voice: Jane Greer on *Stevie Smith: A Selection*

They Were the World: Gary Jason on *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust* 35

### IN FOCUS

The "News" From Moscow: Henry Mason on *Dezinformatsia—Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* 36
Samizdat Philistine: Andrei Navrozov on *Metro*

Dead Cows & Mangled Translations: E. Christian Kopff on *Two Winters and Three Summers* 37

Stray Nuts & Bolts: Peter Katopes on *Machine Dreams*

The Cult of Personality: Gary S. Vasilash on *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980; The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* 38

Passage Back From India: Betsy Clarke on *In Search of Love and Beauty* 39

## DEPARTMENTS

### REVISIONS

Defending America: *In Love and War* 11

Rights for the Left: *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union* 16

### LIBERAL ARTS

Not a Prayer 46

BOOKS IN BRIEF 12, 39

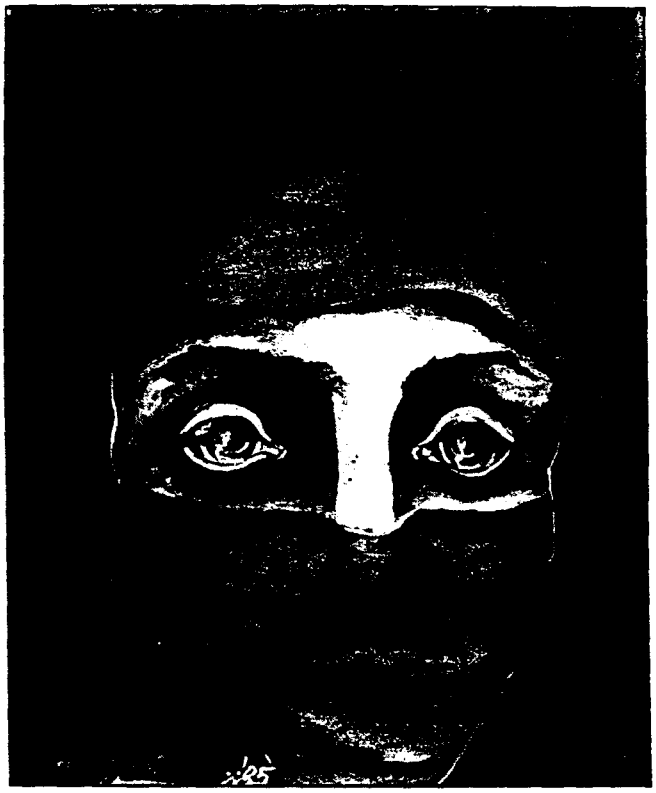
AMERICANA 38



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# LA VIE EN ROUGE *by Thomas Fleming*

The sins of South Africa are once again heavy on the American conscience. The flaws and contradictions built into her multiracial social organization are subjected to the most minute scrutiny and the imperfections in her "human rights" record are held up as justification for revolutionary forces that would cheerfully slaughter the European population of Africa's only state with a thriving economy and with something like a democratic constitution. The usual cast of characters is headed up again by Congressman Steve Solarz—the man who assured us that



Robert Mugabe would bring freedom to Zimbabwe. Solarz's obsession with South Africa leaves him little time to speak out on Mugabe's forthcoming declaration of a one-party state. He and his friends also are curiously reticent about the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, although they filled the halls of Congress with denunciations of their comparatively benevolent predecessor, Mr. Somoza, who was almost as evil and bloodthirsty—to hear them tell it—as the late Shah of Iran or President Marcos of the Philippines. As for the record of the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea, these gentlemen make a strenuous effort to avoid the charge of Red-baiting applied so regularly by *The Nation* to anyone who criticizes a communist regime anywhere in the world. (The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia is a possible exception, but they were, after all, opposed by the Soviet-backed North Vietnam.)

Suppose for a moment that all the lies told about South Africa, the Shah, Somoza, and Marcos were true. Their misdeeds would not begin to approach the accomplishments of Stalin or Mao or Mr. Castro, who holds the per capita record for political prisoners, or the Marxist thugs who are doing their best to starve the entire population of Ethiopia. It cannot be simply a question of left and right: cold war liberals in the early 50's at least talked a good game of anticommunism. It isn't at all clear why decent socialists shouldn't hate the U.S.S.R. a great deal more than they hate South Africa. What exactly is going on?

Perhaps the first thing to observe is that what the American left really hates are the friends of the United States, especially those that profess some commitment to freedom. The form of government does not seem to matter much: it can be a monarchy, as in Iran, an authoritarian constitutional state as in the Philippines, or a Western-style democracy as in South Africa. All are condemned. On the other hand, they adore the violently anti-American African dictatorships which are usually run by the most amazing set of hooligans, straight out of Waugh's *Black Mischief*. The more familiar varieties of tyranny practiced in Eastern Europe are nowhere near so dear to them. If it were just a question of support for Marxist regimes, we would expect Gen. Jeruzelski to receive better treatment in the *New York Times* than, say, Julius Nyerere or Robert Mugabe.

There seems to be a simple formula at work in these calculations: the closer a regime is to America (politically or culturally), the more likely it is to be attacked for its failings. If I were to hazard a guess at why this should be so, I would suggest that we have been looking at leftists from the wrong angle. It is not that their Marxist principles drive them into the arms of the enemies of the United States, but that it is the liberals' hatred of their own country which leads them to embrace any ideology so long as it is the opposite of what we stand for.

How did the left get to be so anti-American? It is at least conceivably possible to imagine a populist form of socialism springing up on American soil. Senator Robert LaFollette, who began as a conservative Republican, ended up as the author of a great deal of social reform legislation packaged as the Wisconsin Plan. At the same time, the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party was as much populist as it was socialist, although the declension from Gov. Floyd B. Olson (an



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ex-Wobbly) to Hubert Humphrey to Fritz Mondale tells a tale. Even Eugene Debs, the most successful Presidential candidate of the American Socialist Party, was, as his biographer puts it, "The classic example of an indigenous American radical." After a brief infatuation with the Russian revolution near the end of his life, Debs cabled Lenin to protest the execution of non-Bolshevik revolutionaries and defended his own independence on the grounds of "having no Vatican in Moscow to guide him." Most significantly, Debs—even in the throes of pro-Soviet fervor in 1917—refused to support American involvement in World War I just because Russia was now "democratic." Norman Thomas, who led the Socialist Party for a great part of the century, opposed American entrance into World War II, partly because he saw no reason for supporting one totalitarian regime against another. Contrast the steadfastness of Thomas and Debs with the oscillations of the American comrades before and after the Hitler-Stalin pact.

To the end of his days, Thomas was a bitter critic of the Soviet regime. It does not take a profound knowledge of politics to understand why the Communists and their tools have hated Norman Thomas and either treated Debs with contempt or cast him in the role of John the Baptist (an allusion which the Christian Debs would have appreciated). Debs, to say nothing of Thomas, refused to take orders from the Comintern. They were the worst of all things—yellow socialists, revisionists, syndicalists. What is worse, they remained essentially loyal to their country.

The case of the most famous American radical, Big Bill Haywood, is more complicated. Bill came from good American stock: his ancestors had fought in every major war in which this country was involved. His father was a Pony Express rider turned miner. Bill also tried mining, as well as cowboying and farm labor, before he found himself caught up in the struggles of the Western Federation of Miners. His trial for the murder of the ex-Governor of Idaho made him a celebrity. After his acquittal, he became a hero of the labor movement and one of the driving forces of the Industrial Workers of the World—the Wobblies. The only really dishonorable thing Bill Haywood is known to have done was to jump bail and flee to the U.S.S.R. rather than go back to a 20-year jail term imposed by one of those superpatriots we could just as well have lived without (Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis). When Bill finally met his hero, comrade Lenin, he was anxious to find out if the workers really ran the factories in Russia. Lenin assured him, "Yes, Comrade Haywood, that is communism." (Poor Haywood was really a syndicalist and didn't know enough Marx to get onto the platform committee of the Democratic Party.)

Lenin could afford to be cynical. He had caught himself a real-live American revolutionary. Most of the socialists and communists in America, especially the leaders, were immigrants from Germany and Eastern Europe, who could not be expected to understand, much less support, American traditions. They spent most of their energies attacking the Wobblies for their deviation from the Party line. But there was a third group: well-to-do Americans of impeccable background, who had never hit a lick in their life. What were they doing in the various Communist Parties that sprang up at the turn of the century? Big Bill met many of them in Greenwich Village when he was trying to raise money for the Patterson strike: bohemian socialites like Mabel Dodge, the muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens, and a young Harvard graduate who wanted to know what the revolution was all about. Bill initiated the boy into the mysteries and gave the world John Reed.

Many American working men, women, and children had reason to be dissatisfied with $6 for a seven-day week of 12-hour days. But as soon as conditions improved, they became quiet citizens. What was eating at the vitals of Steffens, Reed, and the former corporate lawyer Clarence Darrow? What made such men turn against their country?

To judge of the cause of causes is infinite, as Bacon observed, but there are certain tendencies in American history which seem to converge on the America-hating radicalism of the 20th century. Consider their great hero, John Brown, the murderer celebrated by Emerson and Thoreau. He and his abolitionist supporters were willing to destroy the Constitution, raise up insurrection, and preach the massacre of the citizens of one-third of the U.S., simply because they objected to a social institution which, however immoral it might have been, was undoubtedly constitutional.

The sane and reasonable abolitionists like William H. Seward, as well as many Union generals, were almost as frightened by the radicals as the South. But the extremists longed for war. As Lincoln remarked when he met Harriet Beecher Stowe, the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "So, you're the little lady who made this big war." Like their spiritual descendants—prohibitionists, feminists, and communists—the radical abolitionists had all the answers. They knew precisely how other people ought to live. In this quality they resembled many of the Puritan leaders who settled New England. In old England, their friends had kept themselves busy murdering a king and imposing martial law on a once-happy nation. When they came to America, they lost little time in imposing their own peculiar views of religion and society on the not-always-willing populace of Massachusetts.

What fueled the Puritan intolerance was their vision of perfection: they were here to do God's work on a continent ruled by the Devil. The most humane of their leaders, Cotton Mather, saw America as the battleground between the forces of light (the Puritans) against the forces of darkness (Indians, the Catholic Spanish, Anglicans). It was up to God's people to create a paradise in this heathen wilderness. The religious fires of the Puritans waned rather quickly—but not their real zeal to reform the human race. Emerson and his transcendentalist friends were not even Christians, let alone Puritans, but they still carried on the old struggle for perfection.

The Puritans and their residues could not learn to love America, because it was flawed and fleshly. The Constitution, although it made union possible, was not just an imperfect document: it was a pact with the Devil. You were on one side or another, good versus evil. Sensible men like Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and that great statesman from Illinois, Stephen Douglas, were excoriated for defending America as America.

All of this might have been nothing more than a local

*(continued on page 32)*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Epstein review "vicious," the product of a "malignant imagination." Together, Geimer and Shevchenko have established a new institution, the Jamestown Foundation, to assist Soviet bloc defectors in getting adjusted to life in America and in getting their insights about the Soviet system into public policy debate.

John Barron, who has probably done more than anyone to educate the public about the KGB, was also attacked in Epstein's review of Shevchenko's book. Barron, Epstein charges, misrepresented "the Shevchenko spy role" because he had received information from a defector, Stanislav Levchenko, who was "working under contract to the CIA, to hand-deliver to him certain particulars about the Shevchenko case." But in a letter on June 26, a day after he saw the prepublication copy of the story, Mr. Barron wrote to *The New Republic*: "At no time during the period of my basic research with Levchenko [the defector] was he in any manner employed by the CIA." Levchenko, Barron pointed out, refused to take money from or cooperate with the CIA when he first defected. Instead, Levchenko sought Barron out in late 1979, convinced after reading Barron's 1974 book *KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Agents* that he could be trusted. It was then that Levchenko revealed for the first time that the KGB had suspected Shevchenko of being a mole and was planning to call him back to Moscow at the time he defected. Levchenko was told this by KGB agents trying to teach him the dangers of defection. All of this appeared in Barron's 1983 book.

Epstein, however, asserts that he knows about how the CIA uses defectors under contract because "I wrote a book for the *[Reader's] Digest* called *Legend: The Secret Life of Lee Harvey Oswald*, and the CIA sent me Yuri Nosenko." But here again, Barron writes, "Epstein also is inaccurate, and I fear consciously so, when he claims that the CIA 'sent' Yuri Nosenko to him." Barron writes that Epstein asked him to intercede with the CIA for an interview of Nosenko. The CIA said the decision would have to be Nosenko's. Nosenko met with Epstein once, and then Epstein made several

## REVISIONS

### *Rights for the Left*

Whether they are defending the rights of Moslem schoolteachers to wear turbans in class or those of Nazis to march in Skokie, Illinois, the ACLU has long gloried in its impartial protection of constitutional liberties. After all, groups as diverse as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Communist Party, the Amish and the Ku Klux Klan, have all received ACLU assistance. The only published history of the ACLU, *The Noblest Cry* (1965) by Charles Markmann, praises the Union for its "utter lack of partisanship and its concentration on principle." Leading political scientists have often echoed this appraisal. But the myth of ACLU nonpartisanship has now been exploded by William A. Donohue in *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union* (Transaction: New Brunswick, NJ; $29.95). Transaction is to be commended for its daring in bringing out a book thought "too controversial" by other publishers. In a thorough and compelling analysis, Donohue draws upon extensive interviews with ACLU officials and upon public and internal records to document the Union's persistent activism—"from its first annual report to its most recent legal brief"—on behalf of a left-liberal agenda of "egalitarianism, rationalism, secularism, optimism, and anti-traditionalism." "It is no exaggeration," writes Donohue, "to say that social reform, in a liberal direction, is the sine qua non of the ACLU."

Nor is this bias really surprising given the character and outlook of the Union's founder, Roger Baldwin. Born of a wealthy Boston family, Baldwin—like so many of New England's wealthy in this century—detested the backwardness of his country and longed for radical reform. A friend of Emma Goldman and a student of Peter Kropotkin, Baldwin emerged from a year in jail for defying the draft in World War I to join in "the labor movement and . . . the struggle of the workers to control society in the interests of the mass." As a leader of the National Civil Liberties Bureau, he sought "to serve partisan causes through standing on a general principle." Neither aim nor tactics changed appreciably when the NCLB was reorganized as the ACLU in 1920. As a gesture to "general principle," occasional cases might be argued for politically irrelevant groups like the Amish or even reactionaries like the Klan, but the main thrust was never in doubt. During the 1920's, the ACLU's energies focused on the right to unionize and to strike (rights that Donohue concedes really did need defense). Yet it took until 1938 for the Union to decide that free speech might even be a right extended to capitalists, and the abridgment of freedoms entailed by the Volstead Act disturbed them not at all.

Because of their pro-labor, anti-capitalist prejudice, the ACLU enjoyed friendly relations with the Communist Party in the 1920's and 30's. Donohue concludes that the Union never was a communist front, but several of its leaders did join the Party, and many others—including Baldwin—were cheerful fellow travelers. "If," said Baldwin, "I do not see suppression in Fascist and Communist countries with the same eye, it is because Fascist countries offer no chance of economic progress while Soviet Russia does." So entranced was Baldwin by Moscow's utopia-in-the-making that he even refused to believe a Soviet tour guide who broke down in a hotel room and told of all the hidden horrors and repression of the new regime. It was not until the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939—"the biggest shock of my life"—that the spell was finally bro-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

requests to see Nosenko through Barron again, and Nosenko refused. In the August 26 issue of *The New Republic*, Epstein offers further assertions and arguments in response to attacks on his original review. His defense of the driver's license/traffic ticket charge is an exercise in the absurd. Epstein does seem to have uncovered an apparent error in Mr. Shevchenko's chronology, but this error, admitted to by Shevchenko in a press conference, hardly proves Epstein's theories of a KGB-and-CIA plot.

Epstein's first book in 1966 was on the Warren Commission. His 1978 book on Oswald, which he plugs in his latest review, attempted to show that a Soviet defector, Yuri Nosenko, was in reality a mole sent by the Soviets to convince the U.S. that the Soviets were not involved in the assassination of John Kennedy. Nosenko, 21 years later, is presumably biding his time after accomplishing his first mission. It must be a big mission because since his defection in 1964, Nosenko has identified KGB and GRU agents and operations throughout the world. The implication in the original review for *The New Republic* is that Shevchenko has now been properly installed to disseminate Soviet disinformation. Epstein writes that Georgy Arbatov, head of the Soviet Institute of the U.S. and Canada, "could now claim that one of his former colleagues was a regular commentator 'in place' on ABC." A reasonable and charitable person would conclude Epstein is a professional conspiracymonger. A cynic might conclude *he* may be an agent of Soviet disinformation. The charitable interpretation of *The New Republic* is that the decision to publish Epstein is a shameless grab at publicity. But wasn't this practice of recklessly smearing people as Soviet agents generally discredited 30 years ago—along with a certain junior Senator from Wisconsin?

Still, Epstein may have his reasons to "juice up" his own research on Nosenko, Shevchenko, and others. He is under contract to write a book on disinformation for, you guessed it, Michael Korda, editor of Simon and Schuster. cc

---

ken. In the years that followed, the ACLU actually expelled some of its communist leaders and collaborated with the FBI in an effort to keep others from creeping in.

After liberalism turned radical in the 1960's and 1970's, however, this animus against communism became not merely an anachronism but an embarrassment to the ACLU, which now deplores all such "Red-baiting." Lost in the shifting sands of liberalism were a number of other previous ACLU stands. In 1982, the ACLU officially declined to buy all of its supplies from union suppliers. (Union products, it turns out, are expensive.) But while the blue-collar workers fended for themselves, the ACLU was busy discovering previously unheard of "civil rights" for pink-collar (female and gay) and minority citizens. Equality before the law went by the boards in favor of government-mandated economic equality, while the 14th Amendment swallowed the Bill of Rights whole. Having previously argued strenuously against racial advancement by quotas, suddenly the ACLU will not hear of doing without them. And while pressing for rigorous affirmative action standards everywhere else, the ACLU grants itself a waiver because it is "unable to find a minority candidate." Neoconservatism received a big boost when the Skokie case—as Aaron Wildavsky explains in an excellent preface—helped to "clear the decks of those who were attached to the deprived of the past, like Jews, and to reattach those who could identify with the wave of the future deprived."

Jewish intellectuals were not the only ones alienated by the ACLU's new initiatives. The solicitude for the rights of pornographers and criminals coupled with callous disregard for mere victims outraged the millions who applauded when

Edwin Meese labeled the ACLU a "criminal's lobby." Many others marveled at the eagerness with which the ACLU embraced *Roe* v. *Wade*—a ruling without constitutional foundations. Increasingly, Donohue observes, the ACLU has supported legal intrusion into economic matters while stepping up its attacks upon all legal, ethical, but especially religious restraints upon personal behavior. The Union has gone so far as to spy on Henry Hyde and to demand access to his mail in order to "convict" him of being illicitly influenced by religion in his anti-abortion attitudes. But this double standard is nothing new for an organization that wanted to deny Richard Nixon all Fifth Amendment rights during his impeachment procedures and worked hard to censor a 1938 attack by H.L. Mencken. It sometimes seems to outsiders that the ACLU regards hypocrisy not as the 11th Commandment, but as the only Commandment. Donohue warns that the ACLU's assault upon all normative codes, upon family, neighborhood, community, and church—in short upon everything between the autonomous individual and the engorged State—will produce unforeseen consequences. A Hobbesian state of nature invariably produces something like a Hobbesian monarchy: "Despotism awaits the fully liberated individual, freed from custom, social convention, and tradition." Maybe Donohue is being too charitable in saying that the probable results of ACLU policy are unintended. The ACLU's once-adored portraits of "Uncle Joe" may not have been destroyed; they may just be in the basement in temporary storage. cc



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Marxism & Motorcycle Maintenance *by Thomas L. Ashton*

*"The revolutionary loves a man who does not yet exist."*

—Albert Camus

Irving Louis Horowitz: *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*; The Free Press; New York.

In recent years, critics of culture have given the imagination a one-way ticket to the left. *The Liberal Imagination* by Lionel Trilling is followed by *The Radical Imagination* by Irving Howe, which is followed in turn by *The Sociological Imagination* of C. Wright Mills. The imagination, it appears, is on its way to a progressive future. If the idealized future fails to materialize, the fault is with us and not with the left-liberal imagination. *We* will have failed to live up to *it*, failed to dream what we should have dreamed. Provided we never acquire any sense of history by looking back, a one-way imagination guarantees that *The Sociological Imagination* will be followed by *The Androgynous Imagination* and that, no doubt, by *The Bionic Imagination*.

***"Flawed in his personal life, torn between his populist hopes for the downtrodden and an elitist conception of the intellectual's role, he made a major contribution to seeing the modern world more clearly."***

Commonweal

As an enemy of the past and a prophet of brave new possibilities, C. Wright Mills was announcing the New Left *in the early 50's*. In the three studies of stratification he published during the decade—*The New Men of Power*, *White Collar*, and *The Power Elite*—he captured the intellectual reaction to the McCarthy era with a sense of radical alienation that anticipated the tabloid sociology of *Psychology Today*. His next trilogy was composed of 60's books: *The Causes of World War III*; *Listen, Yankee!*; and *The Marxists*. *The Sociological Imagination* is a transitional work, supporting its plan for the future with few of the claims to social science that he had previously felt necessary. Mills died at 45 before he could finish a third triad made of a *Soviet Journal*, essays called in manuscript the "New Left" and intended for a book on *The Cultural Apparatus*, and finally a *Comparative Sociology of the Third World*. We know what Mills intended from two collections of posthumous papers edited by Irving L. Horowitz. Now Horowitz has given us a final interpretation of Mills in *American Utopian*.

*American Utopian* is divided into "Settings," "Sources," and "Substances." This last division, with a title that indicates what actually comes first for Horowitz, is a book-by-book summary of Mills with selected pro and con reactions. Yet it is not a good crib because Mills was a better stylist than his disciple. Condensation clarifies the evolution of Mills thought—but does not improve it. Horowitz's narrow focus on Mills's ideas permits little space for discussion of the influence of contemporary events and even less for pertinent details of Mills's life. *American Utopian* does illuminate Mills's journey from philosopher to social psychologist to sociologist as a quest for intellectual pragmatism, and it exposes the conflict of Mills's preference for philosophy, Max Weber, and broadmindedness and academic sociology's approval of psychology, Talcott Parsons, and the empirical. But it doesn't explain why the Texas Trotsky fell so far afoul of the New York intelligentsia. Horowitz knows Mills the academic not Mills the man, and *American Utopian's* unfortunate equation of academic and intellectual was abhorred by Mills himself.

By carrying the anti-psychological to the extreme of academic stuffiness, *American Utopian* suggests that the evolution of Mills's writing has nothing to do with the *development* of his personality. We learn neither when Mills was born nor exactly when he died. Horowitz titillates with references to Mills's "self-aggrandizing claims to having more women in one month than Don Juan could boast in a lifetime," and to "his continuous interest in sex outside the marriage," but at the same time he fails to identify all of Mills's wives (three) or any of his children. You will not learn here that middle-aged Mills's first trip to Europe was made to attend a factory course on the maintenance of his beloved BMW motorcycle.

The part of the book devoted to "Settings" is little more than an excuse to melodramatize and misunderstand academic life at the Universities of Texas, Wisconsin, Maryland, and Columbia—and to do so from "official" histories written mostly for the benefit of alumni associations. Too often in *American Utopian* Mills the man is missing because he doesn't fit Horowitz's naive vision of Mills the scholar. (I once saw Mills myself at Columbia, taking off on his motorcycle with a good-looking blond on the backseat. He did not look much like a scholar. He looked more like a bear that had lost a fight with a lawnmower.)

Mills himself abhorred academe and academics because they perpetuated outmoded liberalism. He sought what he first called an "independent" and later a "New Left," a left that defied capitalism without embracing Soviet-style statism. But the tumultuous birth of the New Left was still six years away when Mills offended his Columbia colleagues by writing:

> In the Soviet Union Marxism has become ideologically consolidated and subject to official control; in the United States liberalism has become less an ideology than an empty rhetoric.

Mills made the equation of the intellectual and the alienated his paramount theme. Even Reuel Denney,

*Thomas Ashton teaches English at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

coauthor with David Riesman of *The Lonely Crowd*, remarked in reviewing Mills's *White Collar*: "Not all salesmen are Willy Lomans." Mills's work suffered as he put more of his own angst into it. As Richard Hofstadter remarked to him: "You have somehow managed to get into *White Collar* a great deal of your own personal nightmare."

In *The Power Elite*, Mills continued to project his private torments onto a capitalist world that he was sure was governed by some anonymous elite that made decisions without public explanation and without subjecting them to the popular will. In all of the operations of the Invisible Hand of the free market, Mills detected the conspiracy of some Big Brother. But even as Mills was growing ever more paranoid, he was capturing popularity by encouraging resentment of traditional authority. This "resentiment" had nothing to do with the American legacy of individualism and everything to do with the do-your-own-thing flight from responsibility. In the "New Left" Mills wrote:

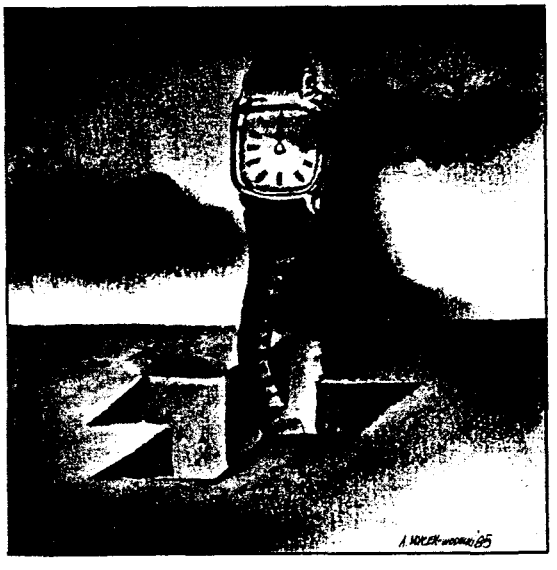
> We cannot create a left by abdicating our roles as intellectuals to become working class agitators or machine politicians, or by play-acting at other forms of direct political action. We can begin to create a left by confronting issues as intellectuals in our work. . . . We should make our own separate peace.

Reviewing *The Causes of World War III*, Russell Kirk pointed out that Mills would only replace one elite with another, "composed, naturally, of Mills and his chums." The tragedy is that Mills would not let himself see that his kind of intellectuals must inevitably become failed academics trying to resurrect revolution in their students. Manipulating relevant scenarios, academic cynics insure the continuance of the self-proclaimed intellectual vanguard. Defenders of genuine imagination prefer intelligence which can weigh and choose for itself, enabling students to surpass their teachers. Championing resentment at any price by generalizing short-term trends into social essences, Mills merely denied the intellect any power to make commitments. "I do not give unconditional loyalty to any institution, man or state," Mills wrote in the "New Left." "My loyalties are conditioned on the politics of truth as I determine the politics in each and every case." As alienated intellectual, Mills finally betrayed himself—with a politics of truth that is no truth at all, and a conditional loyalty that is not loyalty. "My country right or wrong" is a far better choice than "myself right or wrong." cc

# Time and the Cross *by J. Enoch Powell*

***"[They] assemble before daylight and recite by turns a form of words to Christ as god. . . . I discovered nothing else than a perverse and extravagant superstition."***

**—Pliny the Younger**



George A. Kennedy: *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*; University of North Carolina Press; Chapel Hill.

Ramsay MacMullen: *Christianizing the Roman Empire*; Yale University Press; New Haven.

The New Testament is not a book. In common with the Old Testament, to which it can in some ways be regarded as an appendix, like the Apocrypha, it is a library. It is a library of books which have been arranged along a shelf in a most interesting and curious manner, which could quite possibly have been intended to be chronological order—i.e., order of date of publication.

Consequently, almost any general statement about the New Testament has no better status than a general statement about the contents of a library would have. Each of the volumes in this library, separate as they are in origin, having been subsequently collected and bound together, demands to be studied in its own right. To lump them together as if they were one document and then proceed to discuss something called the language or the style or the grammar of the New Testament is a wholly unscholarly proceeding.

Just as little, incidentally, is it licit to treat them collectively as a single source for certain historical events. Until their relationship with one another has been determined—until we have established (if we can) whether Nos. 2 and 3 on the shelf were written by authors using No. 1, with or without any other preexisting materials—further study or comment is procedurally unsound.

This protest is wrung from me by the essay of a professor of classics at the University of North Carolina, in *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*. That anyone who was writing Greek around the beginning of the Christian era was to some extent, directly or indirectly, influ-

*The Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell is a member of Parliament for South Down.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enced by the practice and teaching of rhetoric in the schools of the Mediterranean world during previous centuries is obviously not possible to dispute: but to attempt to interpret in the light of it the Christian library called the New Testament as if it were a unitary and homogeneous work is inherently perverse.

Let me take a crude illustration. The speeches in the Acts of the Apostles belong to the same historiographical tradition as the speeches in Thucydides and can be permissibly studied for form, content, and historical relevance in the same light. But the speeches in the gospels? Take the two monsters in the first gospel, the so-called "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7) and the eschatological discourse in Matthew 24-25. They are not conceived as speeches at all, but dissolve on examination into jumbled collections of prophetic and didactic material, which have been assembled together almost mechanically and subsequently worked over with commentary and elaboration. If, as I happen to believe it possible to demonstrate, gospel No. 3 was an attempt to present No. 1 in a form intelligible and acceptable to a literate and critical readership, it is possible to invoke the precepts of rhetoric to illuminate the form of the editorial work which its author undertook—for instance, by way of taking the beginning and the end of the so-called Sermon as a veritable address and tucking away the rest of the material from it in other parts of his book, wherever he could find a suitable niche.

In these circumstances it cannot be through rhetorical criticism but through textual and source criticism that even a literary, let alone historical, evaluation of the books must be sought. The perversity of doing otherwise is not lessened by the fact that specimens of rhetorical figures and commonplaces can of course be culled from anywhere in the New Testament library. No doubt the "beatitudes" exemplify *anaphora* (repetition); the series of "but I say unto you" sections can exemplify *antithesis* (contrast); and "blessed are ye when men revile you" exemplifies *apostrophe* (direct address). But this is as unenlightening as to classify "I came not to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them" as *prokatalepsis* (anticipation of objection) or to analyze the angel's message to Joseph as a series of *enthymemes*.

The demand for priority to be accorded to textual criticism is really related to the great imperative of all historical writing and historical research: chronology. Sequence in time is not evidence of causation (*post hoc non propter hoc*), but reverse sequence of time is certainly disproof of causation. The course of history may ever and again lose itself in fens and bogs, but what it does not do is to flow uphill. Hence the maintenance of a chronological structure is indispensable to all history.

The price of a chronological structure, a price which causes it to be too often neglected, is that the more strictly it is adhered to, the more difficult it becomes to group events under headings and subjects. Lines of development, which in reality ran parallel, demand for the purpose of exposition to be presented separately, thus breaking the chronological framework. It is a perennial problem of balance, which Professor MacMullen has not quite successfully solved in his pursuit of the rate and the causes of the spread of the Jesus religion through the Roman world between 100 A.D. and 400 A.D. Earlier than 100 A.D. he could not have started; for the earliest datable sources for the existence of the religion belong to the second decade of the second century A.D. Later than 400 A.D. he does not pursue his theme, because by then, though "pagans still made up a good half of the population," "they had been taught to keep quiet."

In outline, Professor MacMullen finds that before Constantine's Edict of 312 A.D. Christianity spread slowly, quietly, and upon the whole at lower social levels. The means of its spread he identifies not primarily as argument or preaching but as wonder-working. Every time a cure which other gods had failed to effect was secured in the name of Jesus, the beneficiary and his family became potential recruits. The case is cynical but convincing. What is more, there is interesting documentary evidence to support it, of which I can draw attention to a specimen.

In Matthew 8:13, the centurion who came asking for the healing of his son had faith—not stated why—that Jesus could order the cure. He was told: "Get you home; as you have believed, so it shall be"; and the text concludes with the words "and the lad was cured in that hour." Now, in the corresponding passage in John (4:50-53), the man was told: "Go, your son lives," whereupon he believed the word which Jesus spoke to him and went his way." The conclusion runs: "and the father discovered that the son had got better at the precise hour when Jesus said to him 'your son lives' and he himself believed." However, an interpolator, ruining the vital point, has added after the word "believes" the words "and his whole household." So powerful, even at the cost of destroying the point of the gospel narrative, was the conviction that the result (not the cause) of a miraculous healing was the conversion of a household!

The effect of Constantine's conversion was revolutionary: except during brief periods of reaction it became advantageous, not least for the upper and official classes, to adopt the emperor's god—a god who now for the first time was of the kind who excluded all competitors. Still, the balance between Christianity and paganism wavered until, in the last two decades of the fourth century, the armed power of the state was used (e.g., under Theodosius), not merely to put down Christian heresies but to support pogroms against pagans.

In support and illustration of this thesis, a large volume of cited evidence is marshaled. Consistent and intelligible though the thesis is, the chronology of the material is crucial. Unfortunately, the author's determination to pursue individual topics, such as "How complete was conversion?" or "Conversion of intellectuals," ensures that the reader's grasp of the all-important chronological framework is distracted and the total impression therefore becomes less convincing than it might have been.

If strict chronology can be established, it is not beyond possibility that the thesis itself might be used with effect in analyzing and dating the Pauline and other materials, not to mention the gospels and the rest of the library itself. ∞



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

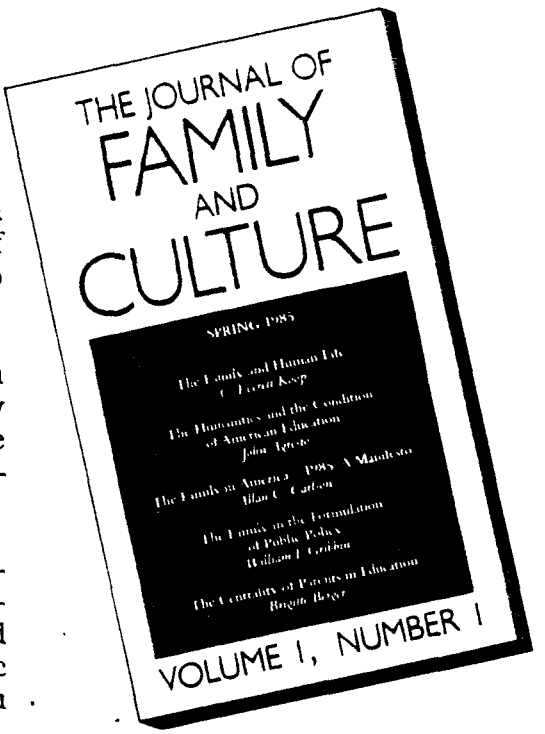
## Do you believe that the strength of the family is critical to the survival of Western culture?

If so, then
THE JOURNAL OF FAMILY AND CULTURE
is must reading for you!

JFC, a quarterly journal of public policy and social commentary, addresses the centrality of the family in issues ranging from education to economics.

With scholarly essays by Thomas Fleming, Allan C. Carlson, Russell Kirk, John Agresto, and many others, JFC offers a unique and stirring defense of the most fundamental institution of society—the family.

President Reagan immediately recognized the importance of JFC when, during his recent nationally televised speech on tax reform, he quoted from "The Family in the Formulation of Public Policy," an article by William J. Gribbin which first appeared in the inaugural issue of JFC.




Subscribe today to THE JOURNAL OF FAMILY AND CULTURE!

ON JFC:

"**The Journal of Family and Culture** appears at a critical moment. This attractive new journal offers a unique and provocative outlet for researchers, scholars, and policy analysts committed to the preservation of traditional family values in this land. Moreover, every issue provides fresh ideas and new arguments with which policy debates are won."

Allan C. Carlson
Rockford Institute

The Summer Issue of JFC

- The Daycare Dilemma — Otto Weininger
- Medical Ethics — Robert L. Barry
- Family, Freedom and the Individual in Orwell's 1984 — Thomas Dufficy
- Morality as Base for Social Welfare — Robert T. Constable

THE JOURNAL OF FAMILY AND CULTURE—Order today and receive the inaugural issue of JFC free of charge!

☐ one year subscription ($10.00, postage included)

Make checks payable to the Child and Family Protection Institute and mail to the child and Family Protection Institute, 721 Second Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Enclosed is my check for $_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Occupation _____

CC


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# SOLZHENITSYN AND DEMOCRACY

*by Edward E. Ericson Jr.*

The name of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has fallen on hard times. My many public lectures on this author convince me that his sympathetic admirers are legion, but even these admirers are troubled that the press commentary on him seems to be fairly consistently negative. While almost all of his Western critics allow that Solzhenitsyn is a majestic presence on today's generally bleak human landscape, most of them save their intensity for stiff negative comments. These comments are less about his art than about his opinions on matters of public life.

The most common criticism is that Solzhenitsyn does not understand the West. And, so the line goes, he especially does not understand—and therefore does not value—democracy. The implicit—and sometimes explicit

—conclusion is that we should not listen to Solzhenitsyn when he speaks about the West in general and democracy in particular. So widespread is this view that it can now fairly be called the received opinion. Perhaps, having had little firsthand experience of democracy (although he has now lived one-fourth of his adult life in the West), Solzhenitsyn is not in the best position to interpret it. But any writer deserves to have his own words heard, and Solzhenitsyn's view of democracy is not what his critics say it is.

The misunderstanding about Solzhenitsyn on the subject of democracy derives from a misunderstanding of—or an aversion to—his general orientation toward human reality. His view of life and human nature is alien to most of his critics. Simply stated, Solzhenitsyn has a religious believer's view of things. Many of his critics do not. Historically, the 18th-century French Enlightenment provided the theoretical basis on which the West's standard secular view of democracy is built. In broad terms, it proposed that for every human problem there is a rational solution. In practice, a rational solution has come to mean a political solution. Solzhenitsyn deviates from this regnant orthodoxy; he does not accede to the primacy of politics. He thinks that moral and religious issues are more important than political ones. Certainly, he does not accept the religion of democracy, a notion safely ensconced in the statement of purpose of virtually every public-school district in the United States, that training for citizenship in democracy is the supreme goal of the educating of our children. He does not believe that the virtues of democracy are so self-evident that we can raise no questions. Indeed, he *does* raise trenchant questions about democracy.

Yet Solzhenitsyn is not antidemocratic, as has frequently been charged by many critics (and especially detractors). At the same time, it is definitely not the case that he is enthusiastically pro-democratic. Rather, Solzhenitsyn articulates a position which can be described as neither for nor against democracy in and of itself. Such a position can be equated with an antidemocratic position only by those who are so enthralled by the abstract concept of democracy that they must see as a foe anyone who is not an ardent advocate of their own position. Indeed, there are hints that Solzhenitsyn's view is more *for* than *against* democracy. But, overall, his view on the subject is a complex matter, not one to be resolved by the affixing of a label.

Solzhenitsyn's attitude towards democracy may be resolved into five positions. First, Solzhenitsyn never urges the states of the West to abandon democracy. Second, he speaks freely of the faults in the practices of modern Western democracies. Third, he fears the social upheaval which he expects would come from a sudden introduction of democracy into the Russian context. Fourth, he imagines that authoritarianism might be preferable to democracy for

*Edward E. Ericson Jr., author of* Solzhenitsyn: The Moral Vision *(Eerdmans), is chairman of the department of English at Calvin College.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Russia of *the present moment*. Fifth—and most important—he has not declared, ever, a theoretical preference for authoritarianism over democracy.

In a recent exchange in the correspondence section of *Commentary* (June 1985), Norman Podhoretz acknowledged all of these five points, yet persisted in thinking that his allegation that Solzhenitsyn was "*explicitly* antidemocratic" (emphasis mine) was just. Podhoretz, who calls himself "a virtual idolator of democracy" (note the religious diction), says that Solzhenitsyn's "antidemocratic" position is the kind with which he can live, but I hope that he cannot live long with the illogic of his position. For Podhoretz does not call Solzhenitsyn either nondemocratic or implicitly antidemocratic, rather *explicitly* antidemocratic. On the basis of which of the five points?

Anything but a mean-spirited detractor of Solzhenitsyn, Podhoretz represents the opinion of a wide spectrum of Western commentators. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. asserts, "As against democracy, with its weaknesses, mediocrity and moral chaos, Solzhenitsyn prefers systems 'based on subordination to authority.'" Schlesinger here is referring to certain passages where Solzhenitsyn speaks only of the Russian situation. Schlesinger does not acknowledge the context, but instead abstracts a phrase from that concrete setting and applies it universally. As we shall see, Solzhenitsyn generally grounds his statements about democracy in some specific historical situation. Schlesinger continues, "Solzhenitsyn's ideal has nothing to do with liberal democracy. . . . His ideal is a Christian authoritarianism governed by God-fearing despots without benefit of politics, parties, undue intellectual freedom or undue concern for popular happiness." The problem with this statement is that Solzhenitsyn has never stated any political ideal of his own. And what of Solzhenitsyn's call for the lifting of censorship when he was still in his home country?

Solzhenitsyn's refusal to offer a political program of his own has frustrated several Western commentators. For instance, Jack Fruchtman Jr., referring to Solzhenitsyn's Harvard commencement address, complains, "Why did he offer this indictment of Western society, and then suggest really nothing in the way of remedy?" But, of course, the remedy which Fruchtman wants would be a statement of political program, and politics is simply not Solzhenitsyn's central concern. Even in the monumental *Gulag Archipelago*, generally received in the West as a political exposé if there ever was one, the author says early, "So let anyone who expects this book to be a political exposé slam its covers shut right now."

It was left to Mary McGrory, in her guileless review of the Harvard address, to get to the heart of the matter of why Solzhenitsyn so offended his Western commentators: "But nothing Solzhenitsyn said went so much against the grain as his negative view of our society. The unspoken expectation was that after three years in our midst, he would have to say we are superior, that our way is not only better, but best." One may applaud her patriotism—while laughing at the charge that *Solzhenitsyn* is the ethnocentric and chauvinistic one.

However, even critics more favorably disposed toward Solzhenitsyn have challenged his view of democracy. Michael Novak at least recognizes that to consider Solzhenitsyn's position, one must focus on "the relation between Christianity . . . and democracy," but he nevertheless does "not think that Solzhenitsyn understands that connection well at all." Solzhenitsyn, according to Novak, can be dismissive of democracy because he locates its source in the Enlightenment and not in the Gospels of the New Testament.

The proper definition of democracy and biblical support of democracy would fill many books. In responding to Novak, I restrict myself to three observations. First, individual freedom is not coterminous with freedom, though some Western democrats seem to think so. Second, the Enlightenment surely has had a profound influence on modern conceptions of democracy. Third, since Solzhenitsyn never rejects the idea of democracy, Novak's argument is beside the point.

Indubitably, Solzhenitsyn would agree with Novak that "democracy by no means ensures virtue, though without virtue it cannot survive." He, above all others, knows, as Novak goes on to say, that "the human heart is endlessly mixed"; he has made the same point repeatedly. How unfitting, then, is Novak's following speculation: "If this were a world of angels, Solzhenitsyn's vision would create a City of Light. Its rulers would be saints, its people willing followers, its constitution the very laws of God. The civilization he envisages would be a heavenly city. The state would wither away." Surely, Solzhenitsyn, with all of his anti-Enlightenment sentiments, is immune to the charge of utopianism—including Novak's variant of angelism (a term, incidentally, used by some literary critics to describe works far different from the kind of Christian realism found in Solzhenitsyn's works).

When we turn our attention from Solzhenitsyn's critics to Solzhenitsyn himself, we see that they seem to be inhabiting different worlds of discourse. Though his detractors bring up the subject of democracy repeatedly and insistently, Solzhenitsyn very seldom addresses the subject, and then only briefly and in passing. Solzhenitsyn asserts, "It is not the task of the writer to defend or criticize one or another mode of distributing the social product, or to defend or criticize one or another form of government organization. The task of the writer is to select more universal and eternal questions." Far from sharing the modern preoccupation with economics and politics, Solzhenitsyn focuses on the perennial moral concerns of human heart and conscience. When he touches upon the domains of economics and politics, it is only to bring a moral judgment to bear upon them. So he can lament that today "the evaluation of political life by ethical yardsticks is considered totally provincial." And he opines that even "the elimination of privileges is a moral, not a political, task." Try to imagine Schlesinger or McGrory saying such a thing.

Or try to imagine them saying, in a situation of oppression such as Solzhenitsyn knew in the Soviet Union, that "the absolutely essential task is not political liberation, but the liberation of our souls from participation in the lie forced upon us." We see how far Solzhenitsyn is from sharing the assumption of the primacy of politics when he says, "The state structure is of secondary importance. That this is so, Christ himself teaches us. 'Render unto Caesar



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what is Caesar's'—not because every Caesar deserves it, but because Caesar's concern is not with the most important thing in our lives."

Once we understand these rudiments of Solzhenitsyn's view of the relationship between morality and politics, we can better approach his comments about democracy. These infrequent comments come in reference to two quite different settings: modern Russia and the West. Some of the confusion over Solzhenitsyn's view of democracy comes from not distinguishing between these settings. Since Solzhenitsyn is a Russian who writes mostly to Russians and about Russia, it is not surprising that most of his comments about democracy refer to the Russian setting.

Solzhenitsyn has spoken clearly about democracy and Russia in three pieces: "As Breathing and Consciousness Return," a response to Andrei Sakharov published as the lead essay in *From Under the Rubble*; the *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, surely the most misunderstood statement written by Solzhenitsyn; and *The Mortal Danger*, a slim volume which first appeared as an article in the American journal *Foreign Affairs*.

In the first of these pieces, Solzhenitsyn challenges Sakharov's theory of convergence between East and West, to which the West's chief contribution is to be democracy. Solzhenitsyn observes that "in the long history of mankind there have not been so very many democratic republics, yet people lived for centuries without them and were not always worse off." With common sense he adds that authoritarian systems, too, can offer people a tolerable life, "provided certain limits are not exceeded." About Russia today and tomorrow he modestly and cautiously suggests,

> If Russia lived under autocracy for centuries and . . . suffered total collapse under the democratic system which lasted eight months in 1917, perhaps—I am only asking, not making an assertion—perhaps we should recognize that the evolution of our country from one form of authoritarianism to another would be the most natural, the smoothest, the least painful path of development for it to follow?

He adds that "we have never been shown any realistic path of transition from our present system to a democratic republic of the Western type." Notice here that it is a particular variant of authoritarianism which is unacceptable and must be changed. Notice, also, that there is no defense of authoritarianism in principle nor attack of democracy in principle.

When confronted in the Soviet Union by the extreme form of authoritarianism which we know as totalitarianism, Solzhenitsyn joins Sakharov in castigating its evils. He does recognize certain virtues of authoritarian regimes: "stability, continuity, immunity from political ague." Yet he warns that there are "great dangers and defects in authoritarian systems of government: the danger of dishonest authorities, upheld by violence, the danger of arbitrary decisions and the difficulty of correcting them, the danger of sliding into tyranny." A system of authority becomes evil when "it demands of us total surrender of our souls, continuous and active participation in the general, conscious *lie*. . . . When Caesar, having exacted what is Caesar's, demands still more insistently that we render unto him what is God's—that is a sacrifice we dare not make!" There were times when autocrats "felt themselves responsible before God and their own consciences." The new Soviet autocrats are "dangerous precisely because it is difficult to find higher values which would bind them."

Some Westerners apparently reject any distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism, and it is hard to know what to say to them. At a minimum, they are stuck with the untenable position of refusing to allow that Solzhenitsyn is an antitotalitarian, despite the whole record of his life and works. They also must come to terms with the whole historical record of regimes which did not seek to control every aspect of a citizen's life—social, cultural, personal—which allowed freedoms of speech, thought, travel, occupation, academic pursuit, religious belief and practice. They are forced to say that all leaders not democratically elected are tyrants.

Solzhenitsyn's position in "As Breathing and Consciousness Return" is unchanged in the two later pieces. The *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* is, for better or worse, Solzhenitsyn's most overt attempt to influence current practical politics. To understand it we must keep in mind its very limited intended audience: the rulers in the Kremlin. It is to these anticipated readers that Solzhenitsyn observes, "Here in Russia, for sheer lack of practice, democracy survived for only eight months—from February to October, 1917." He adjudges that Kerensky and his associates "turned out to be ill-prepared for it themselves, and . . . Russia was worse prepared still." He is here trying to assure the Soviet leaders that both he and they are hardheaded realists, that he will not suggest what Sakharov might: that the cure for Russia's ills is the immediate introduction of Western-style democracy. So he adds, "Over the last half-century Russia's preparedness for democracy, for a multiparty parliamentary system, could only have diminished. I am inclined to think that its sudden reintroduction now would merely be a melancholy repetition of 1917."

Clearly, Solzhenitsyn here is not arguing political theory but discussing specifically the current situation in one state. Yet, even when trying to pacify the Soviet leaders, he refuses to denounce democracy in principle. Indeed, one reading of these statements is that he wishes that Russia were ready for democracy and that he hopes that someday it will be. Such a reading is supported by a later passage, offered in the form of questions: "That for the foreseeable future, perhaps, whether we like it or not, whether we intend it or not, Russia is nevertheless destined to have an authoritarian order? Perhaps this is all that she is ripe for today?" Clearly, Solzhenitsyn is here doing something other than advocating authoritarianism as a desideratum. In fact, he is speaking, uncharacteristically for him, in the language of the practical politician, the language of compromise. He is operating in the same rhetorical mode when he tells the leaders that he understands that:

> You will not willingly tolerate a two-party or multiparty system in our country, you will not tolerate *real* elections, at which people might not vote you in. And on the basis of realism one must admit that this will be within your power for a long



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time to come.

A long time—but not forever.

Having granted to the Soviet leaders that they will not loosen their hold on the reins of power, he proceeds to outline what kind of authoritarian rule he would be willing to settle for. In his words, "Everything depends upon *what sort* of authoritarian order lies in store for us." The villain, he explains, is not authoritarianism *per se* but the ideology which fosters totalitarianism. So he urges the leaders, since they will not willingly give up their power, to exercise it on the basis of a different principle: "Let it be an authoritarian order, but one founded not on an inexhaustible 'class hatred' but on love of your fellow men."

Nowhere does Solzhenitsyn suggest that no evils were committed by the state in the millennium preceding the Bolshevik Revolution. At the same time, even his critics cannot doubt that modern attacks upon human spirits and bodies are much greater than those of bygone centuries. Solzhenitsyn explains: "In those days an important condition was fulfilled: that authoritarian order possessed a strong moral foundation, embryonic and rudimentary though it was—not the ideology of universal violence, but Christian Orthodoxy." The qualification, "embryonic and rudimentary," is significant; it blunts the charge of romanticizing the past, a charge usually leveled only by those who have read Solzhenitsyn casually and in part. But what is key is Solzhenitsyn's belief that any political order short of totalitarianism could work—as long as it is based on a solid moral underpinning, one which honors human dignity. Solzhenitsyn's own opinion is that "Christianity today [is] the only living spiritual force capable of undertaking the spiritual healing of Russia," though he adds, "I request and propose no special privileges for it, simply that it should be treated fairly and not suppressed." This is not the language of a theocrat.

Solzhenitsyn emphasized the pragmatic intent of his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* when he answered some criticisms of it in *The Mortal Danger*. Acknowledging that those leaders would not allow "free general elections" or a change of leadership, the most that he could have hoped for was that there might be certain "concessions on their side," including "a renunciation of communist ideology and of its most cruel consequences." He elaborates, "And the only path down from the icy cliff of totalitarianism that I could propose was the slow and smooth descent via an authoritarian system. (If an unprepared people were to jump off that cliff directly into democracy, it would be crushed to an anarchical pulp.)" In other words, his overriding concern is with the civic health of his people, not with some political dogma. One can understand, then, his chagrin as he adds, "This 'authoritarianism' of mine also drew immediate fire in the Western press." Note his quotation marks around *authoritarianism*. He says that the reaction by Western commentators "simply astonished me." His astonishment is justified.

Really, Solzhenitsyn requests of his Western critics merely that they extend to his people, the Russians, the same latitude that they willingly extend to many peoples of the Third World: "I would simply ask that the Russian people not be denied the same kind of treatment, and that we not be dictated to, just as Africa is not." Those who condone Third World departures from Western-style democracy should take the same attitude toward a Russian people emerging (if they ever do) from the yoke of Soviet rule. Regarding African states, such critics take exactly the same line which Solzhenitsyn proposes for Russia: "The answer can only emerge through an organic development of accumulated national experience, and it must be free of any external coercion."

One specific allegation which Solzhenitsyn finds particularly galling is that he is "an advocate of a theocratic state, a system in which the government would be under the direct control of religious leaders." He calls this charge "a flagrant misrepresentation" and adds, "I have never said or written anything of the sort." (Could it be that this silly accusation persists because commentators read earlier commentators, rather than Solzhenitsyn himself?) He asks for Russia no more of religious presence in public life than can be found in Poland or Israel.

Solzhenitsyn's final, general statement about the future form of government for Russia is this: "As concerns the theoretical question whether Russia should choose or reject authoritarianism in the future, I have no final opinion, and have not offered any." Anyone who persists in calling Solzhenitsyn authoritarian and antidemocratic is advised at this point to recall Solzhenitsyn's charge at Harvard in 1978 that the Western press is guilty of "hasty, immature, superficial, and misleading judgments"—a charge hardly new with Solzhenitsyn.

Although most of Solzhenitsyn's comments on democracy refer to the Russian context, he has not refrained from passing judgment on the West. As Mary McGrory and others have noted with dismay, his judgments have not been glowing. He acknowledges in *The Mortal Danger* that


**The Ingersoll Prizes**
**in**
**Literature and the Humanities**
**1985**

**The T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing**
**Eugène Ionesco**
*Paris*

**The Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters**
**Robert Nisbet**
*Washington, D.C.*

**The Ingersoll Foundation**
*of*
*Rockford, Illinois*

Clayton Gaylord, *Chairman*
John A. Howard, *President*
Thomas Fleming,
*Executive Secretary,*
*The Ingersoll Prizes*

The awards, in the amount of $15,000 each, will be presented at a formal banquet at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Chicago on November 22, 1985.




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his "criticism of certain aspects of democracy is well known." He refuses to believe that "the will of the English people" was implemented when for years England was "sapped of its strength" by a Labor government which received only 40 percent of the vote, nor that any nation is well-served "when half the electorate is so disillusioned that it stays away from the polling booths." Provocatively, he suggests that totalitarian regimes have grown out of weak democracies, not authoritarian regimes. As always, whether one agrees or not with Solzhenitsyn's analysis of defects in democracy, he always directs his criticisms toward specific instances, not toward democracy in theory.

Since the critics have conjoined Solzhenitsyn's alleged antidemocratic stance with his alleged anti-Western sentiments, we must have straight Solzhenitsyn's view of the West in general—and the United States in particular. His own words flatly contradict those who find him antagonistic toward the West: "I am not a critic of the West. I repeat that for nearly all our lives we worshipped the West—note the word 'worshipped.' We did not admire it, we worshipped it." He quickly specifies that which he criticizes: "I am a critic of the weakness of the West. I am a critic of a fact which we can't comprehend: how one can lose one's spiritual strength, one's will power and, possessing freedom, not value it, not be willing to make sacrifices for it." In other words, far from being negative toward the West, Solzhenitsyn calls on the West to be *more* Western, to embrace its traditional values. And, as for this nation, he unequivocally calls himself "a friend of the United States." He declares, "The United States has long shown itself to be the most magnanimous, the most generous country in the world." According to recent news reports, Solzhenitsyn is now seeking U.S. citizenship.

Why are such clear statements by Solzhenitsyn so little mentioned in Western press accounts of him? Why are passages which are much less clear and straightforward picked up and then picked apart in an effort to label him antidemocratic and anti-Western?

Solzhenitsyn's general approval of the West lends piquancy to his criticisms of its defects, some of which are linked to democracy. It was the criticisms in his Harvard commencement address which provoked the greatest outcry of protest. But it is disarming to see a simple listing of the specific objects of his attack: the holding of colonies; passivity in the face of overt criminality, including terrorism; excessive litigiousness; hasty and superficial judgments by the press; intellectual faddism; commercial advertising; TV stupor; "intolerable" music; and a loss of courage and willpower among the American intelligentsia, one result he saw as the hasty capitulation in Vietnam.

Many of Solzhenitsyn's criticisms are standard fare from many Americans. But it was on those points where Solzhenitsyn pointed the finger at the media and intellectuals that they responded with heat. Never mind all of the areas of agreement; he had trodden on (their) sacred ground. It was the responses to this Harvard speech which crystallized the charge that Solzhenitsyn was antidemocratic. Yet, if one coolly examines this speech to see how many of the West's problems Solzhenitsyn blames on democracy, the answer is—startlingly—none. By my count, the words *democracy* and *democratic* appear only five times: of these five, two are in passing, two are of middling importance, and one is of major importance.

Of middling importance is the assertion, "Thus mediocrity triumphs under the guise of democratic restraints." We democrats concede a certain validity to the charge but chalk up the problem—appropriately, I think—to the need to accept a minor vice along with a major virtue. Also of middling importance is the observation that "in the 20th century Western democracy has not won any major war by itself." The context is Solzhenitsyn's assertion that the West could have defeated Hitler's Germany without the aid of the Soviet Union and thus not raised the Soviet Union to the status of world superpower. But such an argument points only to a tactical error and says nothing against democracy.

The major mention of democracy in the Harvard address comes late, near the climax. And, as the climax offers historical reasons for the moral decline of the West, so is this reference to democracy set in historical and moral terms. "And yet in early democracies, as in American democracy at the time of its birth, all individual human rights were granted on the ground that man is God's creature. That is, freedom was given to the individual conditionally, in the assumption of his constant religious responsibility." Obviously, this is anything but an antidemocratic statement. It is especially significant that this Christian writer locates the origin of democracy in the religious impulse (not, as Novak has said, in the Enlightenment). Only secularists could be displeased, and then on grounds that have to do with religion rather than politics.

And all capitalistic democrats should appreciate the following comment by Solzhenitsyn—said, no less, to the Soviet leaders: "[Marxist ideology] was mistaken when it forecast that the proletariat would be endlessly oppressed and would never achieve anything in a bourgeois democracy—if only we could shower people with as much food, clothing and leisure as they have gained under capitalism!" If there is some loose usage here, almost an equating of democracy and capitalism, certainly there is an expressed appreciation for certain of the fruits of Western society, including democracy.

The single most inflammatory comment by Solzhenitsyn on democracy, I believe, is one from *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*. The passage has been used in such damaging ways that it must be quoted at length:

> [Shall we] argue in all sincerity that we are not adherents of that turbulent "democracy run riot" in which once every four years the politicians, and indeed the entire country, nearly kill themselves over an electoral campaign, trying to gratify the masses. . . . While even in an established democracy we can see many instances when a fatal course of action is chosen as a result of self-deception, or of a random majority caused by the swing of a small but unpopular party between two big ones—and it is this insignificant swing, which in no way expresses the will of the majority (and even the will of the majority is not immune to misdirection), which decides vitally important questions in national and sometimes even world politics. And there are very many instances today of



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> groups of workers who have learned to grab as much as they can for themselves whenever their country is going through a crisis, even if they ruin the country in the process. And even the most respected democracies have turned out to be powerless against a handful of miserable terrorists.

There can be no doubt that Solzhenitsyn here expresses distaste for certain practices which he observes in modern democracies. But it is helpful to remember, first of all, that these words are part of Solzhenitsyn's effort to ingratiate himself with the Soviet leaders long enough for them to listen to his proposal that they abandon Marxist ideology. Also, it is simply the case that Solzhenitsyn pinpoints some problems in democracies—including the inglorious aspects of campaigning—which democrats themselves acknowledge. And, from at least John Stuart Mill on, Western political theorists have discussed the dangers of majoritarianism—as if one thought that 51 percent of the vote proved wisdom while 49 percent proved folly.

But the most offending phrase was "democracy run riot." Frankly, I am surprised that this phrase gave offense. For, by putting the phrase in quotation marks in the original, Solzhenitsyn seems to be signaling that he perceives a difference between democracy and "democracy run riot." He seems to be attacking an aberrant practice of a political theory and not the theory itself. This same distinction holds in regard to that one aspect of democracy which he singles out for special questioning: the system of party politics. If democracy means that the people decide on matters of governance, why pour that abstract theory into the concrete containers of political parties? Democracy is the principle; party politics is one possible way of practicing it. The latter does not inevitably follow the former. Indeed, many local American elections are nonpartisan, free of party-affiliated candidates.

Solzhenitsyn fears that an electoral candidate sponsored by a party may have primary loyalty not to the nation but to the party and thus may even damage the nation's interests. It is not parties but nations which are the loci for a language and a whole culture. So he opines, "*Parties* are obviously utterly inhuman formations. . . . *Nations*, on the other hand, are very vital formations, susceptible to all moral feelings." Perhaps the sense of a people, of a nation, runs deeper in Solzhenitsyn, who has felt deprived of it by his government, than it does in his commentators from melting-pot USA. And perhaps his fear of political parties is excessive. But all should recognize that criticism of the party system is not the same as condemnation of democracy.

One other sentence by Solzhenitsyn must be mentioned here, though it has drawn little comment. It addresses neither the Russian nor the Western situation, but that of Taiwan, in a speech given there.

> It seems to be fashionable in the West to demand from all who stand in the forefront of defense, under machine-gun fire, to demand the widest democracy, and not just simple, but absolute democracy, bordering on total dissoluteness, on state treason, on the right to destroy their own state and country—such freedom as Western countries tolerate.

Although this sentence is likely to rub many Western intellectuals the wrong way, it does hint at a distinction which might help much in clarifying Solzhenitsyn's attitude toward democracy. For here he distinguishes not between democracy and authoritarianism, but between one kind of democracy and another. He seems to say that he has no objection to democracy pure and simple, democracy in and of itself. Rather, his objection is directed toward what he labels, perhaps not too felicitously or accurately, at least not for Western ears, "absolute democracy." And, when we see the particulars which he castigates, matters which we have already remarked, we see that his opposition is not to democracy but to a certain licentiousness which he believes that democracy sometimes fosters.

Liberty *versus* license—this time-honored distinction we understand. As commentators have noted from the time when Solzhenitsyn first came to fame, he is a freedom-fighter and antitotalitarian. As in the Taiwan speech, whenever Solzhenitsyn sets Communism in juxtaposition to its polar opposite, he refers not to democracy but to freedom. The evil of Communist rule is not that it disallows open elections, but that it takes away freedoms of citizens. Freedom, we know, comes within forms. If it has no rules or limits, it devolves into license. Those who insist on discussing Solzhenitsyn's staunch support of human liberty in terms of his view of democracy (and then get it wrong) say much more about themselves and their preoccupations than they do about him and his. cc


**The First Annual**
**ERASMUS LECTURE**

❦

**Paul Johnson's**
**THE ALMOST-CHOSEN PEOPLE:**
**WHY AMERICA IS DIFFERENT**

On January 24, 1985, St. Peter's Church in New York City was the setting for The Center on Religion & Society's first annual Erasmus Lecture. It was there that hundreds heard the renowned historian and social critic Paul Johnson speak on "The Almost-Chosen People: Why America Is Different."

Now this extraordinary address is available in booklet form from The Rockford Institute. For your copy, send $1.95 plus 50¢ postage, with the coupon below to: The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103.

☐ YES, please send me a copy of Paul Johnson's "The Almost-Chosen People: Why America Is Different." I have enclosed $1.95 plus 50¢ postage with my order.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Return coupon to:
The Rockford Institute
934 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# RUSSIA'S BLOODY GOLD *by Wladyslaw John Cieslewicz*

*"Lasciate ogni speranza"*
*—Inferno*, by Dante Alighieri

The history of gold mining in Russia—a record of the greatest abuses of human rights ever perpetrated—has seldom been told. The use of slave labor in state-owned Russian mines goes back to the 19th century, when Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian patriots who rebelled against Russian occupation were put to work mining gold while chained to their wheelbarrows. But it was not until after the Socialist Revolution of 1917 and the discovery in 1928 of the gold fields of Kolyma in the Arctic region of northeastern Siberia that Soviet authorities made gold mining the purpose of the most horrible system of death camps in all human history. Between 1931 and 1957 *five to seven million* captive non-Russian peoples perished working in the Kolyma gold mines of the *Dal'stroi* (Far East Construction). "Kolyma znachit smert'" ("Kolyma means death")—such was the sinister reputation among Russian-held colonies of Latvia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Kazakhstan, and others. Though Western governments and the news media knew during the mid-1940's the horrors of Kolyma, they suppressed the reports and misinformed the public—as they continue to do. Meanwhile, scores of American business organizations as well as individual professionals eagerly collaborated with the Soviet authorities with the *Dal'stroi* in operating the mines.

*Wladyslaw John Cieslewicz is professor of mineral economics at the Colorado School of Mines.*

But the communist practice of turning gold mines into cemeteries reversed an old Russian precedent. For it was grave robbers who first discovered the precious metal at the beginning of the 18th century in artifacts taken from the burial mounds of some unknown earlier inhabitants of the Ural Mountains. When Czar Peter I (1672-1725) heard about it, he issued a ukase forbidding—under penalty of death—further depredations on the graves. Whereupon, he promptly sent his own men to carry on this work.

Czar Peter I did, however, encourage prospecting for minerals, especially for gold and silver. In 1719 he decreed *"the gornaia svoboda,"* a law granting prospectors the right to search for, mine, and smelt metal ores on any land, regardless of ownership. This right remained till 1782, when it was severely restricted by Catherine II. Concentrating in the Central Urals, gold mining continued to develop during the 1700's and early 1800's. By 1800 some 50 hard-rock gold mines were active in the Berezov district alone. But it was only after Lev I. Brusnitsin, a miner in the Berezov district, demonstrated the profitability of placer mining that the industry found its real strength.

The search for new placer deposits soon took prospectors east into Siberia. This upsurge in prospecting and mining was encouraged by brief restoration in 1812 of miners' right of eminent domain. Gold production increased dramatically. Between 1754 and 1813, Russia produced only a total of eight tons, but between 1814 and 1861, 620 tons were produced. By 1897 the czarist government finally had enough gold to place the Russian ruble on the gold standard. Among approximately 40 companies that worked the Lena Basin, the largest was the British-owned Lena Gold Fields Ltd. It was chiefly this company that introduced mechanical methods of placer mining into Russia. By 1913 Lena Gold Fields operated 47 mines in this region, producing some 12 tons of gold annually.

During the Russian Revolution, the Socialists purposefully resorted to hyperinflation in order to debase the Russian ruble. Mikhail Bukharin explained the strategy: "The Socialist government must use the money printing presses as machine guns to attack the bourgeois system from the rear." Gold was denied any monetary role, while Lenin predicted that after the Socialist victory gold bricks would be used as tiles for the lavatories of the victorious proletariat. However, as soon as the Socialist regime consolidated its power, the restoration of a sound ruble became the first order of the day. Under the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1922, Russian currency was placed again on a partial gold standard. Each ruble in circulation was to be backed up to 25 percent by gold or by gold-convertible hard currency.

In 1921, the Russian Socialist government ordered speedy resumption of gold and platinum mining. Large geological exploration parties were organized and instructed first to reexamine older gold mining districts and then to



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

carry out expeditions to entirely new regions, especially in Siberia. In 1926, Communist authorities presided over the first convention of the Russian gold mining industry.

But in order to enlist the help of the Western countries in this gold-mining effort, Lenin tried for the first time "the détente." (This strategem—it goes without saying—has often been successfully repeated.) Behind Lenin's dealings with the West was always his conviction that "when the time comes for us to hang the remaining few capitalists, they themselves will compete with one another to sell us the rope on credit." Lena Gold Fields Ltd. did not disappoint him. When they were approached in the early 1920's about again reactivating their placer mines at Bodaibo, the company brought in from the West essential new equipment, including a large modern Bucyrus dredge, and went to work. No sooner were the mines restored to full operation than were the British forced out of Russia, their mines and equipment all seized with little compensation.

The discovery of gold placer deposits in 1928 was opportune for the Soviet leaders. After the Revolution of 1917, they had decided—as a preventive and terror-inspiring measure—to decimate the different non-Russian captive nationality groups in the Ukraine and in Transcaucasia and Central Asia: mining of gold in the Arctic North could well serve this purpose. As a method of extermination the *Dal'stroi* operation proved much more profitable than the gas chambers used later by the German Socialists. Though the average prisoner died within two years of his arrival at the Kolyma mines, he could still produce between 1.5 and 2 kilograms of gold for the Russian treasury. At one time, Karl Marx had defined capital as "congealed labor of the exploited proletarian workers." In Kolyma the Socialists gave the metaphor a bitterly ironic reality. The *vis vitae* drained from each deported Ukrainian worker, Kazakh peasant, or slave from some other nationality group congealed at the mine into the purest form of capital—gold.

In preparation for this "great Kolyma gold rush," the Russians completely reorganized the government agency in charge of gold mining, the Soyuz-Zoloto or State Gold Monopoly. In 1927 Professor Aleksandr Serebrovskii, originally from the Moscow Academy of Mining, was appointed as the agency's new director. The former Bolshevik boss of the Russian petroleum industry, Serebrovskii was a true Socialist Stakhanovite. He organized the training of thousands of Russian technicians to direct the slave labor at the mines. With the help of the executives of the Standard Oil Company and of the American Ambassador in Paris, Serebrovskii was also able to come to the U.S. to look at the modern placer mining technology and to recruit for the Soyuz-Zoloton a number of American placer mining engineers from Alaska and California.

Once prisoners for the Soyuz-Zoloto placer mines were assigned by the Soviet Chief Labor Camp Administration, or GULAG, Serebrovskii was able to disband all private prospecting parties (the "artels") and replace them entirely with slave labor. By 1933 the Soyuz-Zoloto had rehabilitated hundreds of old mines and had brought dozens of new ones in production. Between 1927 and 1933, Russia's gold output rose spectacularly. It surpassed that of the U.S. and Canada; only South Africa kept producing more gold. In 1935, Russian gold output reached 6.2 million troy ounces. In 1940, gold production of Kolyma alone was probably close to 10 million troy ounces.

Simultaneous with the launching of the new "great Siberian gold rush of 1929" was a massive government effort to confiscate all private gold. About one half million people were arrested by the Russian Socialist terror police, the NKVD (predecessor of the KGB), on suspicion of gold ownership. Jewelers, watchmakers, and dentists especially suffered. Those who actually did not have any gold fared the worst. Unable to give up what they did not have, they were tortured to death by incredulous NKVD interrogators.

After 1931 the government greatly intensified its program of exterminating the non-Russian captive peoples in the death camps. It was for that purpose that *Dal'stroi* was established in Kolyma, administered jointly by the Soyuz-Zoloto, the NKVD, and the Red Army. From 1938 on, this organization was also responsible for geological exploration throughout all of northeast Siberia. Before it was disbanded in 1957, the *Dal'stroi* brought to Kolyma, Northern Yakutia, and Chukotka a total of five to seven million slaves. Virtually all of them died there in gold and tin mines.

The policy of extermination was applied relentlessly during the 1939-1945 joint Russian-German war of aggression against Poland. Altogether, some two million Poles were deported or imprisoned in Russia. In the fall of 1941, following Hitler's breach of the Russian-German Military Alliance Against Poland, the Russians promised the Allies that they would free all of the Poles. The Polish Free Government, then in London, started to organize a Polish Army made up of these ex-prisoners. But of the two million deportees, only about 160,000 reported at the Polish military camps. Of the 10,000-12,000 soldiers sent in 1940 to the death camps of Kolyma, only 171 came back, and of the 3,000 sent to Chukotka *not a single Polish* POW returned. "Kolyma znachit smert'" indeed.

But the Poles were not the only victims. From European Russia, many captive peoples—Ukrainian, Crimean, Moldavian—were transported in box cars via the Trans-Siberian railway, either to the port of Nakhodka on the Sea of Okhotsk or to Vladivostok, and from there, during the summer months, by prison boats to the port of Magadan. Normally 3,000-4,000 prisoners were packed on boats originally built for a few hundred passengers. The first death camp of Kolyma was set up in the Nagaev Bay to help construct the port city of Magadan. After 1931, the number of prisoners brought each year to Kolyma varied from 300,000 to 400,000. Prisoners lived in makeshift barracks at the individual "priiski," the State Placer Mines. In Kolyma the customary barbed-wire camp enclosures and watchtowers were usually not necessary. From this remote *taiga* at the Arctic Circle there was no escape. Trained wolfhounds tracked down the prisoners who did attempt escape.

To reach the gold and tin mines, prisoners were driven on foot in the winter over the ice-packed roads from the Arctic ports in Kolyma and Chukotka. Practically all mining was done by hand. A former official of *Dal'stroi*, V. A. Berzin, has described the conditions:."Pick, shovel, and the wheel barrow were the only tools the laborers of *Dal'stroi* had to work with, and they worked year round, even in the winter *at temperatures of 60 C below zero.*" S. V. Levikov reports that "the placer mines looked like gigantic anthills swarm-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing with hundreds even thousands of people digging, loading, and carting away the overburden." During the summer washing season, each prisoner had to load and carry in the wheelbarrow 9.3 cubic meters of gravel per day from the pit to the heap up to 100 meters away. Piles of gravel were then washed by other teams of prisoners. The production norm for the teams working on the washing installation was fixed at 200 grams of fine gold per man per day. During the long Arctic nights, the prisoners had to blast frozen gravel before they could load it on the wheelbarrow. In the washing season, from mid-May to mid-August, the daily norm was 120 full wheelbarrows.

The prisoners, hungry and cold, dressed in rags with shoes improvised from shreds of gunnysacks or pieces of old rubber tires, worked 16 hours a day even during the long winter nights. For their exertions, prisoners received 600-800 grams of bread, hot water in the morning, and a watery soup at night. That was all! The so-called "dokhodiagi," the dying, who were too weak to meet the daily work norm, had their bread rations reduced. Lenin had decreed it: "Kto ne rabotaet, tot ne kushaet" ("No work, no food"). As a result, most prisoners died right at the mine and were buried in the gravel. The bodies of these victims—usually perfectly preserved in the permafrost—are now being caught daily on dragline buckets and bulldozer blades, interfering with the present mechanical reworking of these "technogenic" placers of Kolyma.

During the *Dal'stroi* period, northeast Siberia became the "monetnyi dvor," the mint, of Socialist Russia. According to one source, between 1937 and 1946, the *Dal'stroi* prisoners produced 250 tons of gold annually. Peak production of 300 tons came in 1940. By 1948, northeast Siberia accounted for 85 percent of Russia's total gold production.

But following the exhaustion of rich surface placers, the prisoners were driven at many mines to exploit the underground channel placers by hand, using primitive and dangerous "shaft and drift" method. After 1957 most of the gold mines in northeast Siberia were shut down and remained closed until 1966. During that decade very little gold mining was carried on anywhere in Russia. Since then Kolyma and the other major Russian gold mining areas have revived. Today there are probably about 50 old state placer mines that are again active in Kolyma.

The Russians did not, however, run their death camps without assistance. Between 1929 and 1933, it was American engineers who ran much of Russia's mining industry. One such collaborator was John D. Littlepage, an American placer mining engineer. As he related in *In Search of Soviet Gold* (1938), Littlepage went to work for Serebrovskii and the Soyuz-Zoloto because the pay was two or three times higher than the salary he was earning in Alaska. In fact, several years later, on orders of Serebrovskii, he came to the U.S. to persuade another 10 American mining engineers to join him at the Soyuz-Zoloto. "*I had no trouble in finding first-class American mining engineers to come to Russia*," he wrote.

In Russia, Littlepage went first to the Urals where he helped the Soviets to reactivate some of the old mines. He then organized a program for mine technicians at the old Kochkar mine near Cheyabinsk. Later, Littlepage became a troubleshooter for the Soyuz-Zoloto, solving production problems at the different mines. In his book, Littlepage has nothing but praise for Serebrovskii. He calls the Soyuz-Zoloto "a model Soviet trust." He reserves his criticism for the old Russian mining engineers, who in these early days of Socialist rule still occasionally engaged in industrial sabotage. Yet Littlepage does make reference to the slave laborers from the death camps: "I had former priests and Mohommedan holy men working for me on more than one occasion. Some of them turned out to be excellent miners."

Littlepage attained high rank within the Soyuz-Zoloto, becoming the deputy chief engineer responsible for gold production of this entire far-flung Russian state gold monopoly. Finally in 1935, at the peak of one of the great purges (which claimed even the life of Serebrovskii himself), Littlepage was summoned to the Kremlin to receive one of the highest Socialist decorations, "The Order of the Red Banner of Labor." In 1938, after 11 years of loyal service to the death camps, Littlepage returned with his family safely to the United States.

Many American companies likewise helped the Soviets to rebuild their gold mining and other industries. Companies and banks that offered vital technology and credit shortly after the Revolution included Chase National Bank (later Chase-Manhattan), International Harvester, and Allied American. Occidental Petroleum, General Electric, Ford Motor, Dupont, Radio Corporation of America, Caterpillar Tractor, American Can, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Alcoa soon joined in the effort. Today the Soviets acknowledge this contribution: "Foreign capital," writes S.V. Levchenko, "enabled the Soyuz-Zoloto to reactivate many remote gold mining districts such as those of Lena Basin and to develop new areas such as the Aldan."

In their quest for gold, Russian Socialists also received cooperation from other Western governments. When in 1936, for example, Stalin ordered the Spanish Republicans to transfer the gold of the Spanish treasury to Russia, President Manuel Azaña and Finance Minister Juan Negrin (both Socialists) promptly complied. During the nights of October 22-24, Republican Red Guards in the Spanish port of Cartagena loaded 510 tons of gold (three-fourths of the entire Spanish reserve) onto Russian ships, which then took it to Odessa in the Ukraine. Stalin allegedly boasted: "Spain will never see its gold again." Forty-eight years later, Spain is still waiting.

Between 1945 and 1947, English and American military authorities did their part to provide a steady supply of gold miners for Kolyma by surrendering into the hands of the Russian NKVD between two and three million Ukrainians, Kalmuks, Crimean Tartars, and Russian refugees and POW's found in the West at the end of World War II. This involuntary repatriation carried out under the secret military code "Operation Keelhaul" was ordered by the War Department and Gen. George C. Marshall and carried out with consent of the State Department and with the cooperation of the United Nations Refugee Agency. Concurrently, the British military authorities, War Department, and Foreign Office carried out their own Keelhaul Operation. A gratuitous promise made to Stalin by Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta was thus faithfully kept. Russian authorities immediately executed some of these forcibly returned slaves, sending the rest to the death camps of Soyuz-Zoloto.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For a long time, the American government deliberately withheld the facts about the Kolyma death camps. In 1943, to discredit the grim rumors about Siberia, Roosevelt sent his Vice President, Henry Wallace, on an official mission there. Wallace stopped at Magadan, visited the death camp "Bolshevik" at one of Kolyma's gold mines, then flew on to Irkutsk. On his return to the U.S., Wallace summarized his trip in *Soviet Asia Mission* (1946), filled with warm praise for his host, NKVD General I.F. Nikishov, then commander of all the *Dal'stroi* death camps. About the camps the Vice President wrote: "In North Siberia today, Russians have developed urban life comparable in general to that of our own Northwestern States and Alaska." The *Dal'stroi* organization Wallace compared to "our Tennessee Valley Authority." From his trip to Irkutsk, at that time one of the administrative centers of Siberian death camps, Wallace recorded these impressions: "It was Trinity Sunday, June 4, and the Russian people were celebrating it by walking in the sunshine. The factories were closed, as is usual on Sundays, so the workers could go out and tend their gardens. It was restful to hear the people singing as they strolled along the riverside, the youth playing accordions. In their folk songs one feels the stirrings of the Russian peasant soul." Given such misinformation from the nation's highest elected officials, it's no wonder that *Life* magazine that same year equated the Russian NKVD and the American FBI.

In December 1944, *National Geographic* magazine published a lengthy article by Owen Lattimore, who had accompanied Henry Wallace on the State Department-sponsored visit to Siberia. Lattimore described the *Dal'stroi* death camp organization in Kolyma as "a combination of Hudson's Bay Company and TVA." At Magadan, the headquarters of the *Dal'stroi*, Lattimore noticed that "the wharves in the port were stocked high with American equipment." He also enjoyed "a first-class orchestra and a good light opera company" while at Magadan. About his host, NKVD Gen. Nikishov, the commandant of the death camps, Lattimore remarks: "Mister Nikishov, the head of *Dal'stroi*, had just been decorated with the Order of Hero of the Soviet Union for his extraordinary achievements. Both Nikishov and his wife have a trained and sensitive interest in art and music and a deep sense of civic responsibility." And what about the gold fields themselves, where at that very time up to 400,000 prisoners were being worked and starved to death each year? Prof. Lattimore writes: "We visited the gold mines operated by *Dal'stroi* in the valley of Kolyma River. Instead of the sin, gin, and brawling of an old-time gold rush, we found extensive greenhouses growing tomatoes, cucumbers, and even melons to make sure the hardy miners got enough vitamins."

We get a different picture of the NKVD and Socialist death camps from the few ex-prisoners who managed to escape or otherwise survive. One such survivor was S. Rawicz, who in *The Long Walk* described the death march that followed the transport of 4,000 prisoners to Irkutsk in unheated freight cars in the middle of winter.

> [Red Army] soldiers walked down the train removing seals and unbarring freight cars and ordering: All Out! We stumbled out and shrieking whipping wind and a subzero temperature made us gulp and gasp . . . we shivered uncontrollably. It was the second week of December and Siberia was frost-bound in winter. We met it ill clad only in a pair of trousers, canvas shoes and a thin cotton blouse. Only on the third day in an open potato field buried under two feet of snow were the prisoners finally given an issue of winter clothing. . . . On the fourth day a whole convoy of some 60 powerful lorries drove into the field. Soldiers were detailed into sections of about 20 men, each section disposed to guard 100 prisoners strung two abreast behind each lorry. . . . From each lorry was uncoiled a length of heavy steel chain. A soldier walked between the two men at the head of each column, forcing them apart, and then walked through the middle cleaving the prisoners into single lines. Other soldiers followed him running out the chain. . . . Then 50 men a side, we were handcuffed to the chain by one wrist. The forward end of each chain was secured to a strong hook attached to the rear of each lorry. The troops piled quickly into the back of the lorry. We were ready to start. The procession began to move, the lorry at the head setting the pace. . . . We trudged non-stop through the first night for 12 hours or more.

The chained prisoners were thus driven on foot over 1,000 miles through the snow for two months in the middle of the Siberian winter.

Even as Wallace, Lattimore, and others were spreading their misinformation, the *true facts about Kolyma were already well-known and available* to the officials of the U.S. and the British governments. Former Polish POW's who had survived the death camps began to reach the Free Polish

"The prisoners in the [Dal'stroi] camps at Magadan were honored in 1944 by the extraordinary visit of two eminent Americans, Henry A. Wallace, Vice President of the United States, and Professor Owen Lattimore, representing the Office of War Information. [Dal'stroi], as a good host, made special preparations to receive them. In a single night NKVD personnel dismantled the camp watchtowers around Magadan. From private stocks, they hastily gathered Russian goods to fill the shelves of stores serving NKVD and civilian supervisors in the town. The emaciated women prisoners who toiled as swineherds at the nearby farm were replaced by the most presentable NKVD women available. Strong, healthy, happy-looking young men showed up in the mines to relieve the gaunt prisoners. During the three days the Americans visited the camps, all prisoners were kept out of sight under guard and, for the first and last time, shown motion pictures so they would create no disturbance."

—*KGB*

by John Barron



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Army in 1942. They prepared 62 separate written accounts about the horrendous conditions in the Kolyma camps. Copies of these reports became immediately available both to the Western governments and to the news media. Moreover, the information from former Polish POW's was fully corroborated by reports from other sources, including Russian officials and sailors who defected to the West. Thus the authors of the contemporary misinformation cannot claim ignorance.

"Kolyma znachit smert'"; Kolyma meant death for five to seven million innocent people. Yet are these victims of Russian communism mentioned prominently in the great books written on modern history or even in the principal reference volumes published since World War II in the West? Under the entry *Auschwitz* in the 1985 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, we find: "Nazi Germany's largest concentration camp and extermination camp . . . Estimates of the total number who died at Auschwitz from all causes vary . . . between 1,000,000 and 2,500,000 but sometimes reaching 4,000,000." Even Dachau, in which "only" 206,000 prisoners were registered between 1933 and 1945, is named for infamy. But *Dal'stroi*, the biggest single death camp organization in history, is not mentioned at all by the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The entry under *Kolyma* merely describes the river so named, adding that "the only significant economic activity is gold mining in its upper basin." Under *Magadan Oblast*, we learn that "economic development is almost wholly restricted to mining of gold, silver, tungsten, and mercury." Maybe the entry *Magadan port*, will give us some hint about the sinister history of the entire region. But no. "The city was founded in 1933 as the port and supply center for the Kolyma goldfields. . . . There are a teacher-training institute and several research institutes in the city."

George Orwell predicted that in the "1984" of his fiction the victims of the socialist Big Brother would be eradicated even from memory. Today, in the 1984 of the real world, this fate has actually befallen the victims of Russian Socialism who died in Kolyma. Because of successful censorship in Russia, in her colonies, *and* in the democratic West, these people have disappeared even from the dustbin of history. ∞

# La Vie en Rouge

*(continued from page 5)*

annoyance confined to New England, if the same mentality had not at the same time taken over higher education. Spreading from its spiritual centers—Harvard and Yale—the Puritan mind, stripped of all religious encumbrances, came to dominate the academic world. Obviously, everyone who went to Harvard did not turn out like John Reed, but it is hard for college students to escape the utopian infection of their professors. They know, because they are told it repeatedly, that American history consists of nothing but burning Indians and lynching Négroes, but that it is the American destiny to transcend history and leave our Adam nature behind. Starting out with such glorious illusions, it is little wonder if so many members of the American elite turn their backs on the real America and fall in with the first utopian movement that presents itself.

We are not the only people to suffer from this syndrome. When Burke railed against the supporters of the French Revolution, he recognized that English radicals were willing to sell out their own country for the sake of a foreign ideology. What opened Burke's eyes was, perhaps, not so much his horror at the events of 1789—which were not, after all, terribly alarming—but the eagerness of ideologues to sacrifice their own people to an international ideal.

There, in a nutshell, is the difference between men like Debs, Haywood, and Norman Thomas on the one hand, and the smart-aleck college boys who learned to burn flags before going on to careers as professors, journalists, and congressmen. In his autobiography *The Making of a Radical*, Scott Nearing virtually gives the game away. Nearing dedicated an unbelievably long career to anti-American activities. He left the Socialist Party, when Norman Thomas inspired it to oppose the U.S.S.R., joined the Communist Party, and was a prominent executive in the ACLU. Nearing views his country with undisguised loathing:

> My separation from western civilization and its ways is almost as complete as my separation from the civilizations of Rome and Egypt. I continue to live in the United States, the power center of western civilization because this is part of my assignment, but I have no more sympathy or concern for it than an emissary of the United States has in a precapitalist area of equatorial Africa or South America. The emissary lives in the midst of backwardness, but is not of it. This is exactly my feeling about my relation with the United States, in which perforce I must live.

Perforce? A curious word to use. In any case, Nearing's attitude contrasts sharply with that of a real revolutionary like Haywood. In his last year in the Soviet Union, Big Bill asked a reporter if it were possible for him to go back. He did not share the Russian obsession of ideology, as he explained to several visitors. He had nothing to complain about in his treatment, "but this isn't Idaho or Colorado. I'd like to die back in the United States."

This is a big country, with a long history of conflicts—sectional, ethnic, and religious. The American tradition can be stretched to include even the wildest of the roughneck radicals who continued to love it even in exile. But our generosity cannot extend to the pampered American elite, whose members have waged war for over 100 years on the real America, a nation created in the blood of two civil wars. Many average Americans share Merle Haggard's opinion of these idealists: "If you're running down your contry, hoss, you're walking on the fighting side of me." But as a peaceful man, I wish them all the best and hope some day they should get their heart's desire. It is what Crabbe wished for the English radicals:

> Oh, let them taste what they so much approve
> These strong fierce freedoms of the land they love.

All aboard for Utopia. First stop, Cambodia.

—*Thomas Fleming*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# HOW MANY OF THESE BOOKS HAVE YOU READ?

## Order them today from Laissez Faire!

**MARXISM: Philosophy and Economics**
***by Thomas Sowell***

Sowell's latest book is a lively and readable survey of Marxism. The last chapter is a devastating critique that takes Marxism apart, refuting one myth after another.

**TS0022** (hardcover) **$15.95**

**HONORING THE SELF**
***by Nathaniel Branden***

This book is the culmination of Dr. Branden's work in psychology. "I go far beyond anything I have written before in the comprehensiveness with which I address the issues of self-esteem and personal autonomy."

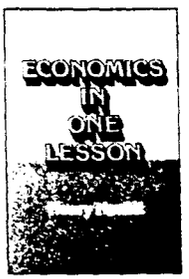
**NB0234** (hardcover) **$15.95**

**THE GREAT INCOME TAX HOAX**
***by Irwin Schiff***

Schiff is in rare form with this shocking expose. He explains how the hated tax began, why it really is unconstitutional, how you can stop paying it — and how you can stop the IRS from seizing your property. Very controversial!

**TX0381** (hardcover) **$17.95**

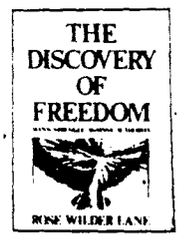
**ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON**
***by Henry Hazlitt***




This is the best primer on economic principles ever written, showing the long-run effects of all government intervention on the economy. A true classic refuting every common myth about the necessities of state intervention and the unworkability of laissez faire.

**HH0014** (paper) **$6.95**

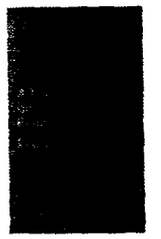
**THE DISCOVERY OF FREEDOM**
***by Rose Wilder Lane***




"This is a book of timeless importance. It must be read by anyone who is seriously interested in the heritage of liberty—not just in America, but the world over. And reading it is a joy."
—Edward H. Crane. New edition.

**IN0001** (paper) **$8.95**

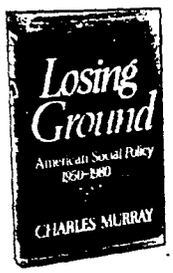
**HUMAN ACTION**
***by Ludwig von Mises***



Mises lays the foundation for understanding economics and analyzes market phenomena—capital, interest, money and prices. A systematic study that covers every major topic of the science of economics. Encyclopedic in its defense of the free market.

**LV0078** (hardcover) **$37.50**

**LOSING GROUND: American Social Policy 1950-1980**
***by Charles Murray***




The book that has destroyed the rationale for the welfare state, making it impossible to assume that government programs serve the poor. Concludes that the solution to poverty is not to increase welfare, but to abolish it.

**CU1520** (hardcover) **$23.95**

## ORDER TOLL-FREE!

**1-800-238-2200**
**EXT. 500**

• CONTINENTAL US •
24 hours a day • 7 days a week
OR SEND YOUR ORDER TO LAISSEZ FAIRE BOOKS
Dept. CC511, 532 Broadway, NY, NY 10012
Enclose $1.50 postage & handling

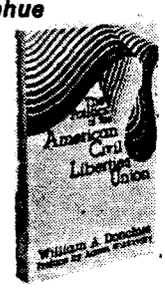
**MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**
If for any reason you are dissatisfied with any book, just return it within 30 days for a refund.

**THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY**
***By Morris and Linda Tannehill***

This provocative book projects a totally free society without government and shows how liberty, justice and peace can be maintained by means of the free market. This new edition contains a foreword by Karl Hess and an introduction by Doug Casey.

**PL0207** (hardcover) **$14.95**

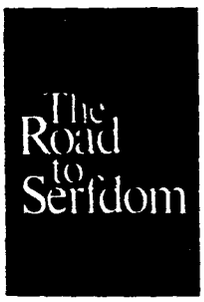
**THE POLITICS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION**
***by William A. Donohue***




A fascinating historical dissection of the ACLU refuting the myth of its political neutrality. This book should cause many liberals to reexamine some deeply-held beliefs.

**CU1509** (paper) **$14.95**

**THE ROAD TO SERFDOM**
***by F.A. Hayek***




This timeless classic shows why state planning must undermine both political and economic freedom and end in serfdom. "One of the most important books of this generation."
—Henry Hazlitt

**FA0113** (paper) **$7.95**
**FA0114** (hardcover) **$12.50**

**THE EARLY AYN RAND**
***Edited by Leonard Peikoff***

In his introduction Peikoff writes, "What kinds of stories did she tell before she could invent complex plots involving an entire society or even the whole world? What kinds of characters did she write about before she was able to project Howard Roark or John Galt?"

**AR0157** (hardcover) ***SALE $9.95***

***TO ORDER CALL TOLL-FREE*** **1-800-238-2200 ext. 500**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## COMMENDABLES

# Behind the Pogonias

by Brian Murray

William H. Pritchard: *Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered*; Oxford University Press; New York.

In 1922 *The Literary Digest* asked selected American poets and novelists to name "the most important" living American writer: Joseph Hergesheimer finished first and Eugene O'Neill second; Sherwood Anderson edged out Willa Cather for third. For fifth place James Branch Cabell tied Robert Frost, who first gained wide attention in 1915 with the American publication of *A Boy's Will*, his first book of poems.

In the decades that followed, Hergesheimer and Cabell plunged into obscurity, and Anderson—whose *Winesburg, Ohio* was described by Susan Sontag as "dogged and pretentious"—became, in some quarters, something of a joke. O'Neill and Cather remained widely respected, but neither came close to achieving the enormous popularity and acclaim of Robert Frost. By the late 1950's, Frost was America's unofficial poet laureate—the regular recipient of testimonial dinners, honorary degrees, and senatorial proclamations.

Frost deserved the accolades. He produced solid, often indisputably first-rate verse for close to five decades. Consider "The Gift Outright," "The Black Cottage," "Two Tramps in Mudtime," and "The Death of the Hired Man." As these poems remind us, Frost steered clear of self-pity and morbid introspection. He combined precise diction, careful phrasing, and a brilliant narrative sense; on occasion he frankly celebrated time-honored American values: work, thrift, self-reliance. Indeed, as David Perkins has noted, Frost was "one of the few significant writers of the 20th century whose work seems to preserve poise and sanity of mind."

Of course, some American critics—particularly those with leftist inclinations—found much of Frost's work most unpalatable. Edmund Wilson, who cut his teeth on Rimbaud and Mallarmé, thought Frost's neo-Georgian style and New England settings "excessively dull." Granville Hicks complained that there were no factories in Frost's poems and no allusions to the theories of Sigmund Freud. Rolfe Humphries suggested that the older Frost got, the more he sounded like Edgar Guest; Horace Gregory insisted that he detected, in Frost's *A Further Range* (1936), the voice of Calvin Coolidge.

After his death in 1963, Frost's reputation did suffer a more general decline, but not principally because the objections of the likes of Humphries and Hicks had begun to take their toll. It was Lawrance Thompson's biography—published in three volumes between 1965 and 1976—that prompted many to reexamine not only their sense of Frost's poetry, but their admiration for Frost the man. As William Pritchard points out, Thompson portrayed a generally venal and vindictive Frost, and many American reviewers—like gossipy matrons in a beauty salon—eagerly repeated the charge. Helen Vendler, for example, proclaimed Frost "a monster"; Howard Moss dubbed him a "mean-spirited megalomaniac." Another reviewer decided that he simply could not imagine a human being more "hateful" than the cagey old fraud who hid behind "Birches" and "Rose Pogonias."

As Pritchard notes, making one's way through Thompson's biography is a bit of a chore. The book is filled with important dates and not irrelevant domestic details, but it also displays a flat and overweight prose style that Vendler aptly described as "doughy." It is, moreover, badly skewed. Thompson, Pritchard suggests, was obviously earnest and well-intentioned, but he simply failed to appreciate Frost's sense of irony, theatricality, and play. He was "overeager to fix Frost in explanatory categories," and thus was quick to find in virtually every one of Frost's actions "another example of retaliation, or vindictiveness, or arrogant 'spoiled-child' behavior." The "particularly unattractive" Frost whom Thompson portrays is then—according to Pritchard—"much at variance" with the real-life Frost whom many still remember with vividness and some affection.

Pritchard, who teaches at Amherst, made the pages of *USA Today* some months back when he publicly protested the cancellation in his viewing area of *Search for Tomorrow*—one of the hoarier afternoon soaps. He is not, however, a lightweight. He is invariably perceptive and fair; he is—as his 1968 study of Wyndham Lewis also proves—a reliable guide to the difficult works of complicated and often cantankerous authors. Pritchard's well-written and balanced life of Frost is short on scandal and long on intelligent exegesis; all who attend to it will find it worth their while. cc

*Brian Murray is professor of English at Youngstown State University.*

# A Vibrant Voice

by Jane Greer

*Stevie Smith: A Selection*; Edited by Hermione Lee; Faber and Faber; London and Boston; $16.95.

*Voice*, it is called: that quality of certain poets' accumulated poems which stamps their singular metrics or syntax or vocabulary onto our personal sound-system. *Voice* makes us unconsciously imitate the music of a good poet we've been studying. *Voice* lets us recognize the author without peeking at the cover.

Now, it's true that every second slim little poetry volume on the "market" today carries, zipped up snug in its jacket, a blurb by some other famous or infamous poet who claims that *this* new poet possesses a "tremendous sense of voice." In this usage, *voice* means . . . well, I'm not sure. I would challenge all such jacket-quoted literati to identify other, unsigned poems by their protégés from a pile of similar—and equally insignificant—others. It should be worth a hefty grant if they can do it.

But the *voice* in Stevie Smith's poetry is genuine. So, too, is the intelligence, grand and pointed enough to understand human vulnerability to arrogance, cruelty, doubt, sin. Together, these two gifts *should* be enough to overcome the sometime disapproval of strict formalists (Smith is shocking and



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relentlessly playful and quite sacrilegious—one might even say *capitalistic*, she *uses* them so—toward the twin gods of meter and rhyme) or strict free-versifiers (even her prosier poems and prose works are far from prosaic, which must distress devotees of the cult of Just Write What You Feel). In fact, Smith, a student of classical English poetry and a highly talented metricist with a faultless ear, is "strict" about little else but making us see ourselves as we are. Only she does it with vastly more wit and affection than your basic modern clergyperson.

Smith felt driven, in many of her poems, to expose the ridiculous, complacent, snobbish, unduly complicated side of modern established Christianity, the side that is highly fortified not against the Devil, but against newcomers to the communion. "Was He Married?" is a cynical, wistful litany of the ways in which Christ did *not* share in the earthly sorrows of real humans; yet the poem's ending hints at Smith's philosophy: "To choose a God of love, as [Man] did and does, / Is a little move then? // Yes, it is. // A larger one will be when men / Love love and hate hate but do not deify them? // It will be a larger one." "The Airy Christ" couches in its charming musicality some bull's-eye theology: "Whatever foolish men may do the song is cried / For those who hear, and the sweet singer does not care that he was crucified. // For he does not wish that men should love him more than anything / Because he died; he only wishes they would hear him sing."

"The Airy Christ" and "The River Deben" (which, like many of Smith's poems, explores a longing for death) are as *organic* as any poems in modern English literature—perfect, memorable matings of content and form. Songs as poetry is meant to be song, they speak of humankind's oldest and deepest sorrows. Yet this organic quality is present in nearly all Smith's poems, even the silly ones. Her rhyme is at once artificial (like Ogden Nash, she sometimes goes to great lengths to get there from here) and absolutely natural (her lines are seldom unconversationally metered, which only shows how metrical human conversations really *are*). Nothing could be more "natural" than the half-rhymes, internal rhymes, alliteration, and tight metrics crammed into the inconspicuous two-line "To an American Publisher": "You say I must write another book? But I've just written this one. / You liked it so much that that's the reason? Read it again then." Her rueful recipe for ceasing to long for death, stated in "Thoughts About the Persons From Porlock," is, "Smile, smile, and get some work to do / Then you will be practically unconscious without positively having to go." Robert Lowell had it right when he wrote about Smith's "cheerfully gruesome voice"; her poems are dark as Charles Addams' cartoons, but softened with a tenderness lacking there.

The poems in *Stevie Smith: A Selection* were picked from *The Collected Poems of Stevie Smith*, published in England in 1976 and in the U.S. in 1983 (Smith died in 1971). The prose was extracted mainly from Smith's novels and other works. If, as Lee says, "The suspicion that [Smith] is an overrated minor English comic writer is likely to persist," what has she done to alleviate the problem? How, for instance, does Lee's *Selection* stand up against the *Selected Poems* compiled by Smith herself and published in 1962?

Very well, thank you. There are a few small poems in Smith's selection which perhaps should have been included in Lee's, but the omissions are not grave, and all the best poems in the former—50 or so of them—appear in the latter. In addition, of course, the best of the poems Smith published between 1962 and her death, and representative excerpts from her equally highly voiced prose, are offered in this new selection. Hermione Lee's book, "designed especially for students but also for the general reader," is slender and strong enough to astonish a few Lit. 202 classes and, together with Smith's original kinky drawings, leads provocatively to the larger, complete works of this underrated poet. ∞

*Jane Greer edits and publishes* Plains Poetry Journal.

# They Were the World

by Gary Jason

**Miron Dolot: *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust*; W.W. Norton; New York; $16.95.**

Most people are unconcerned about the plight of the very poor because they have their hands quite full enough providing for the health and safety of their own families. But then there are "the fashionably concerned," those who are very concerned that they *appear* concerned about the poor. One thinks of certain entertainment personalities, religious leaders, and (of course) academics.

In such circles, public indifference is now considered bad form. Professors ritualistically bemoan poverty (and oppression and other bad things), but rarely reach into their own pockets. Similarly, entertainers who enjoy feeling publicly guilty of being American rarely do penance by donating the princely sums their countrymen pay them for mediocre work. Instead, they keep their fortunes and make themselves highly visible in fund-raising efforts—like the rock video *We Are the World*. Truly helping the needy, however, requires more than goodwill and generosity. It requires an arduous study of what caused the hunger and of what actions will eliminate these causes.

Anyone genuinely concerned about those now suffering in Ethiopia should read Miron Dolot's powerful new book, *Execution by Hunger*. Dolot eloquently describes the famine that the Soviet government inflicted upon the Ukraine and other areas in 1932-33. Dolot rightly calls the Great Famine a holocaust. Five to seven million died in the Ukraine alone, along with *half* the population of Kazakhstan. These people were killed as part of the official government policy set by Stalin. They died not because of anything they had done as individuals, but because they belonged to the wrong social groups.

Stalin committed this genocide to complete his ruthless campaign of collectivization. Agriculture, which had recovered from the ravages of the revolution and civil war, was deliberately devastated by a campaign to force peasants off their own land and drive them into the communes. Former serfs were to be landless once again. The property of 25 million peasant households was to be combined into 250 thousand collective and state farms. The kulaks (i.e., all successful farmers) were to be liquidated as a class—and that meant killing millions of people.

Statistics cannot convey the real horror of such an event. Dolot vividly describes what he witnessed, much as Solzhenitsyn did in *The Gulag Archipelago*. The result is a vivid but frightening account of how a village filled with decent, closely knit, quiet religious folk can be put through hell. Dolot conveys his insights through fascinating vignettes. Those who sympathize with liberation theology would greatly profit from the story of the Marxist priest (affectionately known to the villagers as "Comrade Judas"), who helped destroy the village church during a government-staged riot. His description



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of what the later stages of starvation do to the body and the soul is chilling.

Dolot's description of the cunning ways the government enforced and utilized the famine to achieve policy objectives is especially timely, for Ethiopia's Marxist dictator Mengistu is using hunger to destroy the Eritrean movement for independence in the same way Stalin used that weapon against the Ukraine. Without historical perspective, it is impossible to imagine that even Marxists could be so cruel.

Unfortunately, the fashionably concerned probably will not take the time to read Dolot's testimony. It is much easier to buy a record or a T-shirt and "show" your concern than to actually sit down and think about how to help the Ethiopians. Why worry about dead people who once *were* the world? cc

*Gary Jason is professor of philosophy at Washburn University.*

## IN FOCUS

# The "News" From Moscow

by Henry Mason III

**Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson: *Dezinformatsia—Active Measures in Soviet Strategy*; Pergamon Brassey's; Washington.**

The analysis of *dezinformatsia* here provided by Richard Shultz and Roy Godson is overloaded with scholarly paraphernalia, ranging from statistical tables of Soviet "overt propaganda themes" to an erratic glossary containing a pompous and unnecessary definition of "forgery" ("Forgery, one of many disinformation techniques, is the use of authentic-looking but false documents and communiques"). Because of a zeal to appear "learned," the authors' style and method of presentation often get in the way of their message. Nonetheless, *Dezinformatsia* contains much valuable information about Soviet propaganda methods. Unlike some other writers in this field, Shultz and Godson properly emphasize the central importance of International Information Departments of the Communist Party's Central Committee rather than focus entirely on the KGB. The book also includes a useful analysis of Soviet manipulation of front groups to further the U.S.S.R.'s foreign policy goals.

If *Dezinformatsia* has a major substantive flaw, it is its failure to give sufficient attention to Soviet exploitation of the non-Soviet press, which is the rhetorical technique that most immediately strikes the reader of Soviet publications. In connection with the Korean airliner outrage, for example, the Soviet countercharge of espionage was elaborately buttressed by references to Western sources ranging from the San Francisco *Examiner* to the *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker (who, as one émigré commentator put it, "frequently provides Soviet newspapers with extremely useful quotations"). Similarly, a recent *Pravda* diatribe on "psychological warfare against Afghanistan" cited three separate non-Soviet sources (the *Christian Science Monitor*, the USIA, and the "Indian magazine *Link*") in addition to agencies of the Afghan puppet regime.

When convenient Western sources do not already exist, it is easy enough to create them, and Soviet chutzpah in this area knows no limits. A good illustration is the Soviet coverage of the assassination of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, who was shot to death by his thuggish comrades of the New Jewel Movement, a party inspired by the Soviet Union and its hirsute marionette, Fidel Castro. Shortly after the American liberation of the island, *Pravda* suddenly announced that Bishop had been murdered by the CIA. *Pravda*'s source for this remarkable intelligence was an obscure English-language weekly located (of all places) in New Delhi.

According to *Pravda* (December 20, 1983):

> The weekly magazine *New Wave* has published facts incontrovertably demonstrating that the murder of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was carried out by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency on orders from the White House. . . . Based on the testimony of Grenadian eyewitnesses who fled the island after its occupation, the magazine writes that the CIA succeeded in recruiting the chief of the Prime Minister's personal bodyguard and one of his subordinates, who carried out Washington's order and shot Bishop.

However, as a commentator for the Russian-language New York daily *Novoye Russkoye Slovo* noted, not only is *New Wave* too small to employ any foreign correspondents, but at the time of Bishop's murder Grenada was crawling with Soviet journalists, including a *Tass* correspondent. (Now the Soviets have issued a postage stamp to commemorate the "fortieth anniversary of the birth of Maurice Bishop, the Prime Minister of the People's Revolutionary government in Grenada, who met his death in 1983 at the hands of enemies of the Grenadian revolution.")

Though Shultz and Godson frequently sacrifice clarity for pedantry, any attempt to expose the Soviet disregard for truth can only be welcome. cc

*Henry Mason III is an attorney in Chicago.*

# Samizdat Philistine

by Andrei Navrozov

**Alexander Kaletski: *Metro*; Viking; New York; $17.95.**

The philistine is alive and well in Soviet Russia—and, like his brethren the world over, he is writing novels. It is a mistake to assume that under the conditions of totalitarianism, culture naturally separates, like oil and vinegar, into two discrete layers: the official, government layer and the subterranean, clandestine one. Instead, rather like the dressing on a tossed salad, culture under any political conditions is an emulsion that coats the living fiber of society as if it were the leafiest Bethany lettuce. Accordingly, the epithets "good" and "bad" are not synonymous with "samizdat" or "Goslitizdat"; as elsewhere in the world, the wind bloweth where it listeth. In *Metro*, billed punningly as "a novel of the Moscow underground," the wind bloweth not.

To be sure, the Soviet philistine turned novelist is not as virulent a species as his West European or American equivalent. After all, since any unofficial act is an act of dissidence, every time he takes up the pen he flirts with martyrdom; his Western confrere risks only unemployment. Still, while this makes one something less of a philistine than the other, it has little effect on either one's writing, and equally bad novels can be written in a writers' colony in San Francisco and in a penal colony in Vorkuta.

Typically, the philistine's novels contain richly varied material—comedy and tragedy, farce and drama, truth and invention. He can write about anything, in any style, because he is not



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ashamed to write without genius. In *Metro*, the author describes his life and adventures; he wishes to convey that life in Russia had many unhappy, or perhaps even tragic, moments, though many of his adventures were comic. In brief, the joys and sorrows of the author's life can be described as those of love and youth; his adventures are meant to make the reader laugh at the absurdities of day-to-day existence in the Soviet capital.

Not one line in this novel is genuine literature; not one comic adventure is above the level of a scabrous anecdote, or one situation anything but an aggregation of sloppy details. Yes, the philistine is alive and well in Soviet Russia—and he is publishing in the United States. cc

*Andrei Navrozov is editor of the* Yale Literary Magazine *and a contributing editor of* Harper's.

# Dead Cows & Mangled Translations

by E. Christian Kopff

**Fyodor Abramov: *Two Winters and Three Summers*; Translated by Jacqueline Edwards and Mitchell Schneider; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; San Diego.**

Fyodor Abramov was awarded the State Prize of the U.S.S.R. in 1975 for his trilogy of life on a rural commune, *The Pryaslins*, of which *Two Winters and Three Summers* is the second volume. "Begin at the beginning, go on to the end, then stop," was the King's advice to Alice, but Harcourt Brace Jovanovich prefers to start in the middle, perhaps because Deming Brown wrote in his *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*: "If *Two Winters and Three Summers* had been written by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, it would have immediately been translated in the West and proclaimed a masterpiece." Not all readers may agree.

The narrative centers on life on a rural commune in the years after World War II, when it begins to sink in that the good life Stalin promised is still not on the horizon. The protagonist, Mikhail, tries to keep his family and commune together but sees both dissolving under the pressures of grinding poverty and an equally grinding central bureaucracy. At the end of the book, one of the few good workers is hauled away forever because he is a Christian; Mikhail's beloved sister, Liza, decides to marry a loutish jerk with good Party connections; and the family's cow dies. I know. You are smiling. But all three are tragedies of the first magnitude, although Liza's marriage does at least get them a new cow. The narrative is slow-paced and depressing, but interesting as a clear, if simple, vision of Russian life and as an example of the Russian genre of "village prose."

The translation is a disaster. The original is permeated with authentic regional peasant dialect. The translators decided to reproduce this with the corniest 1930's slang. The diction is loaded with "Kicking the bucket," "Bold as brass," "Quit blubbering," etc. This twenty-three skadoo English—false to any feeling of rural concreteness—gives the reader the irritating impression of reading the script for a Hollywood B movie—*The Dead End Kids in Russia*, with Huntz Hall as Mikhail. Authenticity is sought through the preservation of a few transliterated Russian words, e.g., *kolkhoz* and *kolkhozniki* for "commune" and "communard." The translators give us the transliteration of the Russian measure that equals two-thirds of a mile, with results "You could smell . . . a *verst* away." There are a few notes, one of which tells us what "Stakhanovite" means.

Mercifully, Abramov died in 1983, before he had to endure the sight of his masterpiece sporting the bizarre zoot suit it now wears in the United States of America. cc

*E. Christian Kopff is professor of classics at the University of Colorado and an editor of* Classical Journal.

# Stray Nuts & Bolts

by Peter Katopes

**Jayne Anne Phillips: *Machine Dreams*; E.P. Dutton/Seymour Lawrence; New York.**

Using the backdrop of a small Southern town slowly awakening to the cultural and social rumblings of the mid and late 20th century, Jayne Anne Phillips is attempting in this novel to weave the lives, dreams, and remembrances of the Hampson clan of Bellington, West Virginia, into a mythic mosaic of the sort found in Faulkner. Written with a sharp eye for detail and an ear well-tuned to language, the book nonetheless never lives up to the reader's hopes. For the creation of a myth demands more than the illusion of significance. Myth affirms unity over fragmentation and requires an author to establish the universal importance of particular and seemingly unimportant details. *Machine Dreams* falls short of these standards.

"It's strange what you don't forget," remarks Jean Hampson as she reminisces with her daughter Danner in the opening scene. Yet not everything remembered is necessarily important, a truth which Phillips often ignores as she piles detail upon meaningless detail.

The very structure of the novel militates against any clear understanding of the theme. Phillips has chopped *Machine Dreams* into 17 sections, few of which cohere. Some of Danner's sections are clearly intended as revisions of her mother's own life story, and the letters from a son serving in Vietnam are obvious echoes of his father's earlier V-mail letters. But the book too often reads like a collection of short stories—some of them good but not integrated into a compelling whole.

Because of the title, the reader suspects that some deep meaning lies buried in the frequent dreams about machines—World War II bulldozers, cars in snowstorms, ominous airplanes. Yet it is difficult to say just what is being symbolized. Is it the mechanistic materialism of industrial America? Is it brute or brutal death? Or is it merely


MOVING?

LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.

To assure uninterrupted delivery of *Chronicles of Culture*, please notify us in advance. Send this form with the mailing label from your latest issue of *Chronicles of Culture* to: Subscription Department, *Chronicles of Culture*, P.O. Box 800, Rockford, Illinois 61105.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the author's stunning realization that people occasionally die—some deservedly, others unjustly.

*Machine Dreams* will perhaps have brief appeal for those readers looking for hostile portrayals of America. When her brother dies in Vietnam, Danner remarks: "I felt betrayed by my government but I'd expected betrayal: I just hadn't expected betrayal to such a degree." But like a typical dream—a succession of images and half-formed ideas—this book will soon be forgotten. ∞

*Peter Katopes is an assistant dean at Adelphi University.*

# The Cult of Personality

*by Gary S. Vasilash*

Roland Barthes: *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*; Hill & Wang; New York.

Roland Barthes: *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*; Hill & Wang; New York.

The life of Roland Barthes will never be serialized on *Masterpiece Theater*. Born in 1915, he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis as a young man (1934), and spent part of his life in sanatoriums. Barthes's education was conventional enough: he received a license in the classics from the Sorbonne, participated in the foundation of the Groupe de Théatre Antique, and achieved a graduate degree in Greek tragedy. At one point, Barthes was a pre-med student (his main interest was psychiatric medicine), but he did not complete his medical studies. For the most part, Barthes was an educator: he taught in Rumania, Egypt, and, of course, France. In 1980, four years after being appointed to the Chair of Literary Semiology at the College de France, Barthes was hit by a van and fatally injured.

Barthes exists for us only as a presence in his books. Today, there are 19 books signed "Roland Barthes" available in English. *On Racine* was the first available in the States; it appeared in 1964. It didn't cause much of a stir here, but it did in France after it was published in 1963. Barthes was attacked in 1965 by a Sorbonne professor, Raymond Picard, who answered *Sur Racine* with *Nouvelle critique ou nouvelle imposture?*

Picard's attack on the 50-year-old upstart resulted in a new vibrancy for the image of Barthes: remember, this was the 1960's, those heady days when even a literary slap at the establishment could result in popular acclaim. Barthes answered Picard with the concept of a structuralist "science of literature," in which the language and levels of meaning would be of real value; the reading room would become a sterile laboratory; fecundity would be limited to a petri dish. The death of the author was heralded, for each reader would have the possibility of constructing his own meaning from the constituent elements of the text. Or, more fundamentally, the death of *authority* was announced.

But there still remained a difference: the structuralists usually had undergone rigorous academic training and so had internalized the methodologies that they claimed to oppose. Their texts —and those of Barthes are excellent examples—tended to be even more mystifying than those which they were in revolt against, those which they said covered the *real* nature of writings with a thick frosting of bourgeois ideology. Structuralist writings for the "people" or the "masses"? Hardly.

This paradox is evident in *The Grain of the Voice*, a collection of interviews with Barthes, and in *The Responsibility of Forms*, a collection of his essays on "Music, Art, and Representation." In *The Grain of the Voice*, an interviewer for a French fashion magazine says this to Barthes about his *The Fashion System*:

> One expects to read incisive commentary . . . or else a sociological analysis. It's nothing of the kind. Your book is in fact a scientific work, very austere, containing many pages which reminded me (to my annoyance, I admit) of the algebra textbooks and grammatical analyses of my childhood!

Algebra textbooks and grammatical analyses, so far as I know, have never caused people to man the ramparts—or at least not in this century.

Typical of Barthes's mystifying language and tortured construction is this passage from "Rhetoric of the Image" in *The Responsibility of Forms*:

> The connotators do not fill the entire lexia; reading them does not exhaust it. In other words (and this would be a proposition valid for semiology in general), all the elements of the lexia cannot be transformed into connotators; there still remains in discourse a certain denotation without which, in fact, discourse would not be possible.

Which *seems* to mean that a language requires explicit meaning. But straightforward formulations just don't do; Barthes apparently relished textual density.

## AMERICANA

*Abraham Lincoln: The Man Behind the Myth* by Stephen B. Oates; Harper & Row; New York; $12.95. A sympathetic look behind the Sandburg hagiography at a complex man obsessed with death and madness, ambitious for high office, and just as willing as the Radical Republicans to use military force in preserving the Union, eradicating slavery, and reconstructing the South.

*Lincoln Dictionary*; edited by Ralph B. Winn; Philosophical Library; New York; $5.95. An alphabetized anthology of quotable Lincoln statements on everything from "Abolition" to "Young Men."

*Jack Tars & Commodores: The American Navy 1783-1815* by William M. Fowler Jr.; Houghton Mifflin; Boston. In this stirring sequel to *Rebels Under Sail*, the American Navy proves itself in the Barbary Wars. Fowler manages to combine a sound grasp of technical detail with a narrative art that makes some chapters read like Kenneth Roberts.

*The Confederate Governors*; edited by W. Buck Yearns; University of Georgia Press; Athens. A revolution for states' rights inevitably put an enormous burden on the governors. This much-needed study is an important step toward understanding the significant role played by the chief executives of the Confederacy.

*No Chariot Let Down: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of the Civil War*; edited by Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark; University of North Carolina Press; Chapel Hill. William Ellison, a slave who obtained his freedom in 1816, was the wealthiest free Black in South Carolina. At the outbreak of the War, he owned 63 slaves. These letters, written by family members, are a good portrait of the Black bourgeoisie and its anxieties in 1860.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is exciting to be at the extreme: it can even be lucrative. In an essay written in 1973, Barthes notes of a favorite artist, "Réquichot did not exhibit his canvases (they are still widely unknown)." He even quotes the then-dead painter as having said at some point: "What I make is not made to be seen," yet Barthes goes on at length, on, about, and around the painter and his works. Why? Because the painter was an outsider.

Barthes became what he opposed: he became the establishment. Certainly, the establishment in which he participated was of a different order than the old guard, but it was no less selective. If Barthes exists today as a presence in his 19 books, the personality which emerges from the interviews, such as those in *The Grain of the Voice*, cuts a more impressive figure.

The author is not dead. Barthes's continuing success proves that beyond a doubt. The author—still no less an authority figure—has simply absorbed new attributes, those brought on by the interest in the type of pen that he uses and in his work habits: all of those types of biographical tidbits that structuralism was to get rid of. Obviously, even Barthes couldn't accept that. Obscurity reaps rewards only in relation to the degree to which it becomes public. cc

*Gary Vasilash is contributing editor of* Chronicles of Culture.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

*Women Clergy: Breaking Through Gender Barriers* by Edward C. Lehman Jr.; Transaction; New Brunswick, NJ; $24.95. An enthusiastic report on experiments with women clergy now being promoted in the Presbyterian Church by enlightened church bureaucrats in Washington and New York and resisted by the unregenerate locals who (used to) fill the pews. If women preach in the style of sociologists, it's no wonder that the Protestant "main line" is reduced to a trickle.

*Red, White and Blue Paradise: The American Canal Zone in Panama* by Herbert and Mary Knapp; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; San Diego; $16.95. An insider's look at the fascinating history of the Canal Zone and at the lies told by those who gave it away.

# Passage Back From India

by Betsy Clarke

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala: *In Search of Love and Beauty*; William Morrow; New York.

Identifying the patterns of life, tracking the process of modern thought and action, requires an author who knows a big idea from a little one, a tall order in a day of moral relativism and cultural confusion. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala appears to be such a writer. She is German born, of Polish-Jewish descent, British educated, a long-time resident of India, and a part-time New Yorker, giving credence to her ability to write with some authority on a variety of cultures. The troubling question is whether she damages her piercing observations by overstating her case and whether her aim is directed at the proper target.

In 1975 Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust*, a novel set mostly in India, won England's Booker Prize for the best novel published in England that year. *In Search of Love and Beauty* returns to the themes of *Heat and Dust*: personal identity, moral disintegration and lack of direction (especially in modern youth), sterility and reproduction, and the burdens and effects of time and ancestry. But the author's most recent effort is no improvement on its predecessor. In place of the previous preoccupation with the faith and traditions of India, the new novel takes us to the Academy of Potential Development, a psychospiritual center accepting the money and presence of "a motley crew with motley problems of sex, drugs, nerves, religion."

Some of the characters seem to have been plucked from *Heat and Dust*, but they have been twisted in a more sinister direction here. The fixation on shocking sexual behavior and the absence of normative characters makes for a depressing book. Even when the author reverts to Indian settings, the theme remains decadence.

Jhabvala does succeed in demonstrating that people are the creators of their culture rather than the innocent victims of it. Her subjects are three deracinated German immigrants who bring to New York their language and their furniture, but absolutely no moral or evaluative sense. They socialize with other "German and Austrian refugees who had managed to get their money out but felt bored and stranded." Their "search for love and beauty" is superficial and filled with unresolved contradictions. No one is in pursuit of truth. Preying on these rootless people is the notorious Leo Kellerman, a man "into human nature" who—first through theater and then through the Academy—encourages self-obsession. "Self-centered here wasn't a bad word, it was an aim, an ideal," the author explains. Kellerman, of course, has his own agenda. He seduces and lives off wealthy women, takes over their apartments for his classes, and humiliates them and his other patients through his degrading speech, action, and Academy policy. His clients, nevertheless, hunger for more. A typical follower scorns her parents for being "so proud of being liberal agnostics"—even as she complains that her son has ruined his chance to become a marine biologist by joining a Hare Krishna community.

Family roles and sexual obligations are helter-skelter. Successful marriages are nowhere to be seen, and homosexuals are coming out of every closet. The novel does not label homosexuality as a perversion, but at least it is honest about the disgusting desperation of the aging homosexual man and about the incessant appetite of gays for young boys. By stressing the fact that fathers were absent from the early homes of these deviants, the author even suggests a cause for their frenetic and sterile sexuality.

Disintegration of moral standards, a self-obsessed citizenry, and cultural disease are timely subjects. And the range of the novel is impressive, contrasting sharply with most modern fiction about this or that middle-aged adult finally deciding to grow up. The problem with extending a story of boredom and anxiety over three continents is that the numerous characters fail to take on sufficient importance—they seem to be mere objects of curiosity. There is more to American civilization than self-improvement czars and their willing victims. There is illness, but there is also recovery and health. What this novel needs is less restless anomie and some of the more gentle, concentrated scenes found in the author's earlier work. cc

*Betsy Clarke is an instructor of English at William Woods College, Fulton, Missouri.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Letter From Washington

*by William L. Armstrong*

*Birds Fly, Fish Swim*

We Americans are optimists. As people of goodwill and great intentions, we find it difficult to comprehend a system of government or a political philosophy that has no place for decency or compassion.

From time to time, however, something happens that makes us face the facts of international life. Solzhenitsyn writes *The Gulag Archipelago*. Korean Airlines' flight 007 is shot from the skies. For former President Carter, who had belittled "an inordinate fear of Communism," the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan put things back into focus. And for all of us, the behavior of the current government of Ethiopia should be a similar lesson.

Back in February, when Congress was considering a measure to add $175 million to our already generous emergency aid to that country, it was time to commit candor on the Senate floor. And so, I observed that "this great famine has become merely another weapon in an inhuman campaign to make slaves of the Ethiopian people." It may not have been diplomatic to describe Ethiopia's ruler, Mengistu, as "a home-grown barbarian with a foreign Communist ideology," "a Marxist version of Idi Amin." But it was certainly accurate, and subsequent events have vindicated my assessment.

In the last days of April, some of the thugs who currently control Ethiopia decided to disperse more than 50,000 refugees, including thousands of infants, from the Ibnet famine relief camp. Western reporters and relief workers have described what happened next. Without warning, the pathetic starvers were driven from their huts, which were then set aflame. Two women miscarried while fleeing the troops. Nurses said that hundreds of seriously ill children simply disappeared. Relief officials feared that half the refugees would perish in their desperate trek to food and water. By the second day of the "evacuation," relief workers were counting the dead along the dirt pathways through the mountains.

The United Nations assistant secretary general in charge of emergency operations in Ethiopia reacted predictably. Kurt Jansson faulted "the hastiness" of the operation and hoped that "in the future Ethiopia will handle this more efficiently."

Perhaps it will. For a model of efficiency, Mengistu can turn to his ideological brothers in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge, whose efficiency was fatal to three million of their countrymen. But this is a matter that will never be debated by the UN in its new $73 million conference center underway in Addis Ababa, where the diplomats' restaurants will never lack food and their treasury will never lack dollars.

The wonder is that anyone can still be surprised by all this. It is not in the least remarkable. Birds fly, fish swim, Communists commit atrocities. That is not accidental; it is essential to what they are.

At the risk of becoming "Cold Warriors," we should make the point clear. All Marxists, whether in Addis Ababa or Moscow or Managua, are absolute materialists. That is, they insist that human life is nothing but matter, like a stone or an insect. If a mountain is in the way, blast it. If women and children are in the way, blast them. The only difference between their killing of U.S. Army Major Nicholson in Germany this year and their massacre of thousands of Polish military men in Katyn Forest during the Soviet-Nazi alliance is that the earlier operation required a larger grave.

That is not anti-Communist propaganda. It is, and always has been, the bottom line of Marxism. Individuals have no meaning, no rights, no identity. They are clods of earth to be plowed into productivity for the state.

Why are we surprised, then, when thousands of African children are set off on a death march across the Ethiopian highland? Haven't we read about the Afghan youngsters whose arms are blown away by gaily colored toys booby-trapped by the Soviets to maim toddlers? Haven't we heard about the Jewish and Christian boys and girls in the Soviet Union who are treated like criminals for their family's faith? Yes, there are infants in those Siberian prison camps, and their jailors are the men with whom we are trying to negotiate arms agreements and trade deals.

These people are, after all, true to their school. Their first teachers, back in 1918, were not content to kill the Czar. They had to murder his children as well. They are now in their seventh decade of systematic annihilation; and there are still those in the West —indeed, in our Congress—who profess shock when it happens again, this time in Ethiopia.

Just as the Ethiopian tragedy is in a continuum with the past of Communism, so too it is surely but a prelude to its equally ghastly future. It is just a question of where this happens next. In little Benin? In Leninist Congo? In what used to be called Upper Volta before its latest "people's revolution"? It could well occur in Mozambique, where $28 million in emergency food aid from the United States is propping up a Communist regime even more incompetent than the one in Ethiopia.

It is naive not to expect more such calamities. They have been a part of Communism's genetic code since its birth, and they will remain so until its death. For yes, even monsters are mortal; and this monstrous distortion of the mind and spirit need be no exception.

In the meantime, though we may be repulsed by the Ethiopian government, we should not be paralyzed by it. We could not make it rain in Ethiopia; so with the rest of the free world we poured in hundreds of millions of dollars in food and medical



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supplies. We could not control the weather; so we sent thousands of volunteers to feed, heal, and comfort. We have countered tyranny with mercy, and brutality with an open heart.

But how are we to respond over the long run? When the famine passes and the people of Ethiopia confront the underlying cause of their suffering —their Marxist rulers—what will be our answer to their need? Having saved them from starvation, will the free world help them save themselves from Soviet control? That depends upon whether we have learned well the lesson of Ibnet. ∞

*William Armstrong is a United States Senator from Colorado.*

# Letter From the Lower Right

*by John Shelton Reed*

### *Random Violence*

To begin with, an anniversary: September 20th of this year marked a decade since the death of Alabama Representative Ray Burgess. The Honorable Ray, described at the time of his death by the *New York Times* as "a volatile segregationist and sometimes [*sic*] lay preacher," had a habit of bringing his pistol onto the floor of the Alabama House of Representatives. When some of his brother legislators took exception to this practice and threatened a resolution to forbid it, he agreed to stop. But he vowed to carry his sidearm elsewhere and announced that he had armed his entire family. His life, he said, was "a gift of God, and God gave me the ingenuity to protect that gift."

After his death, his colleagues eulogized him as a man who "contributed immeasurably to the enrichment of our cultural, economic, and everyday lives." Mr. Burgess was shot in the head by his wife during a quarrel.

The Preston Brooks Society observed September 20th as a day of mourning and self-examination.

* * *

As everybody knows, the Southern tradition of self-reliance goes way back, and who is to say it's not needed as much as ever? Here is a grand story from the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* for June 17, 1884:

> There is a bold gang of robbers and housebreakers working this city now, and it behooves every citizen to keep a well-loaded shotgun near at hand and ask no questions of unseasonable visitors, and crack away at every unusual noise. Better kill a cat or two through mistake than be robbed of all your worldly possessions, and perhaps get a broken head for interfering.

* * *

Down here even men of the cloth know how to take care of themselves and their own—although they sometimes make mistakes, too. In Houston, the Associated Press reports, a Baptist preacher, the Reverend Larkin Power, was leaving his Rotary meeting at the Holiday Inn when he encountered his wife being led away in handcuffs by the police. In his righteous anger he hit a sheriff's deputy "right where it hurts." Unfortunately, Mrs. Power had been duly arrested, at a "party" arranged by the vice squad. She was charged with prostitution, he with aggravated assault.

Joe Bob Briggs, the inimitable former drive-in movie critic of the Dallas *Times-Herald* commented: "I'm sure [Mrs. Power] was just in there witnessing to some sinners, and matter of fact, I wish she'd come up here and witness to me."

* * *

Despite what you see on *The Dukes of Hazard*, hell-for-leather driving is not a universal Southern pastime. In fact, the five states with the highest rate of compliance with the 55 m.p.h. speed limit, according to the Federal Highway Administration, include West Virginia, South Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia. (The worst are Nevada and Massachusetts.)

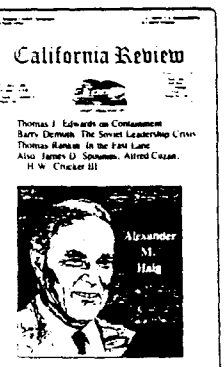
I mention this because it appears that it's dangerous to rush Southerners. Or so the *New York Times* implied: an article last year warned visitors to Texas not to honk at other drivers. "It's considered rude. You could get shot." The *Times* sniffed that "people from other parts of the country take the view


California Review

"Not since Aristotle put down his pen has there been such consistently penetrating writing."—**George Will**
"Lively, literate, and fun to read."—**Wm. F. Buckley Jr.**
"An important publication."—**Charlton Heston**

If you'd like to read an outrageous journal that features interviews with the likes of Milton Friedman, Clarence Pendleton, Arthur Laffer, and Jack Kemp, that showcases the best in iconoclastic collegiate journalism, and which elicts enthusiastic huzzahs from Alexander Haig, Midge Decter, and R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., then you should subscribe to *California Review*.

Dear Sirs:
I want to help save the American Republic. Please send me six issues of *California Review* so I may have the necessary ammunition to defend my spouse, family, and country from the barbarians (liberals) who surround us. Enclosed is my check for $15.
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State_____ Zip_____
Clip and send to California Review
P.O. Box 12286
La Jolla, CA 92037
All contributions are tax-deductible.







LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that shooting people is a bit rude itself."

Of course, people get assaulted in New York for *no reason at all*. The contrast between Southern and Northern attitudes was illustrated a couple of years ago by the case of Mrs. Roberta Leonard, a 65-year-old visitor to the Big Apple from Sylacauga, Alabama. Shortly after arriving at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Mrs. Leonard used her cane and a .32 she happened to be packing to stand off a welcoming committee of young New Yorkers who wanted her pocketbook. When the police arrived, they arrested nine people. One of them was Mrs. Leonard, charged with carrying a pistol without a permit.

One of the most interesting things to emerge from the Bernhard Goetz affair was a list of who *is* licensed to carry handguns in New York. It included the publisher of the *New York Times*.

* * *

Finally, last year saw the trial of a chiropractor accused of murdering his wife, dismembering her with a chain saw, and throwing a miscellany of body parts into the river. Relax, Texans: the 36-year-old bone jockey, his wife, and the other woman (named Terry) were all from Davenport, Iowa.

*John Shelton Reed's hobbies are pit-bull fighting and shotgun practice on Mason jars.*

## CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

***Who will censor the censors?*** That is a question asked increasingly by librarians and other defenders of pornography in the United States. At the University of Wisconsin, at least, we know the answer: it is the Board of Regents, who recently ordered the Union Council (a predominantly student organization) at the Madison campus to return *Playboy*, *Playgirl*, and *Penthouse* to the magazine racks of the student unions. The sponsor of the resolution made use of the old slippery slope argument: today it's *Playboy*, tomorrow it will be *The Nation* (not a bad idea, really), "and after that the *National Review*." In a ringing defense of academic freedom, he declared, "We can't stand idly by while a small segment of the community makes a judgment on what is pornographic." The counterargument was predictably feminist. One female regent suggested that "men's magazines" put women in "non-positive situations." Apparently, *Penthouse* would be an appropriate journal to hawk and vend in state-supported schools for Wisconsin adolescents, if only it put women into positive situations. (They get to wear the leather?) You have to wonder how these people ever graduated from college, much less became regents.

Meanwhile, *Playboy* is mightily afraid of a conservative backlash, so much so that it has written William Buckley to ask his support. Mr. Buckley, by his own account, has written frequently for *Playboy* and is one of the many celebrities that has been the subject of a *Playboy* interview. Of course, the interview is the most important part of the magazine —we don't know anyone who has looked at the rest of it. What *was* the editor of *National Review* doing in any part of a girlie magazine? His explanation is that as a journalist, he has an obligation to seek out audiences. We wonder if the argument extends to the publications of the KKK and the American Nazi Party. But we can trust the editor of *National Review* to know what he is doing.

The same might be said of the editors of the new *New Republic*, who recently discovered that rock music is full of pornographic lyrics. What is more, the degeneracy in popular music "has to be viewed in the larger context of American pop culture." Does this mean we should censor the airwaves? Of course not. You see, Cole Porter was naughty and Jimmie Rodgers was suggestive. Prince may be more explicit, but his lyrics are only symbolic of a collapse in our "sexual standards and community values." This sudden concern with community values is welcome, but why must it stop short of action? Urban culture in the U.S. is degenerate, but some measure of restraint is still exercised in the rest of the country. Children, being the little animals they are, will always respond to the most brutish appeals within a culture. The obvious solution is for adults to determine what is good for them and forbid what is not. That is at least part of what it means to be a grown-up. And if there are adults in our society who refuse to grow up, well, then it is up to the rest of us—even if we were a minority—to enforce our views, supposing we are strong enough. In any event, we have to make the effort. Otherwise, we shall end up disgruntled liberals, old men who "sit and hear each other groan" about their impotence. cc

***Affirmative Action Art*** is all the rage in California. Recently, the California Arts Council decided that, because of "social conditions which have historically denied some groups access to the mainstream and . . . complicated patterns of cultural bias," race-blind awarding procedures were no longer adequate. A new "cultural outreach" was called for with hundreds of thousands of dollars especially set apart for "the state's underserved ethnic minority art groups." "We want to better reflect the cultural diversity of the state," explained Paula Leftwich of the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arts Council's Los Angeles office. Those eligible to apply under the new initiative include those whose "origins or ancestry" are "American Indian, Alaskan, or Aleut natives who retain their ethnic identification; Asians or Pacific Islanders . . . Blacks . . . and Hispanic people."

As with other forms of affirmative action, annoying questions suggest themselves. Can a one-quarter Cherokee apply—if he braids his hair and lives in a tepee? Given one application by a one-eighth Hispanic artist named Martinez and another application from a one-half Hispanic artist named Smith, which one will most likely receive a grant? Since the Arts Council concludes its list of eligible groups with the curious statement that unspecified "other eligibility criteria" may also apply, we suspect that a proper set of "Jew Laws" is being written.

In any event, in the race for public largess, "minority applicants" will now be shielded from the rigors of competing against Irish-American playwrights, Russian-American pianists, or Anglo-American painters. Intent upon "expanding the number of ethnic minority artists and arts organizations who are able to apply for funding," the Arts Council will someday get around to caring about standards of achievement and performances, but not yet. California taxpayers are no doubt thrilled at the prospect of subsidizing Eskimo whale hunts, Aztec human societies, and other exotic cultural celebrations. After years of paying for avant-garde insults to all moral and aesthetic norms, Californians might actually prefer to see their tax money spent on snake dances or Shinto shrines.

But it remains to be seen that government support will actually *help* Oriental, Indian, or Black artists. What, after all, does California—or any other state—have to show for the millions of tax dollars already spent on paintings and poetry that are just "good enough for government work." It's not just an American problem. *The Economist* recently reported that despite dramatic increases in government spending on the arts under Mitterrand, French literature, painting, and theater have never been more lifeless.

Community support for the arts is one thing, government subsidy quite another. The government makes a bad job of almost everything it undertakes, and if we can judge from what it does to politicians sent to Washington, it cannot be very good for character and integrity. A good artist might be willing to collaborate with an intelligent patron, but become a government flunky? Never. Almost by definition, what gets subsidized is usually bad art—not just in a technical but also in a moral sense. By a sort of Gresham's law, the overabundance of government art drives the genuine article out of the marketplace. It is worth wondering why. cc

*"Perversion of the law"* took on new meaning recently when homosexual groups forced Georgetown University—a Catholic school—to grant them official recognition. In a 2-to-1 decision handed down with the unusual stipulation that the case must be reargued before a full appeals court, a three-judge panel of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals reversed a lower court ruling and declared that the university must accept Gay People of Georgetown University and the Gay Rights Coalition Law Center as legitimate student organizations. Citing the precedent of *Bob Jones University v. United States* (1977), the majority opinion asserted that an "overriding governmental interest" in enforcing a Washington, DC, antidiscrimination ordinance outweighed the school's claims to religious liberty. We can see it all now. Before long "they" will be demanding entrance to all-male clubs and an affirmative-action law guaranteeing them special opportunities to be Boy Scout leaders and kindergarten teachers. Soon we will be made fun of if we object to one of them marrying our sons.

Until the homosexual groups sued the university, elected city officials had alleged no violation of the statutes they had framed, and the first court to hear the case found that GU's policy of quiet toleration constituted compliance. Enter two Federal judges with an insatiable rage for equality and things were quickly turned upside down. The one dissenting judge, Julia C. Mack, found the comparison to the *Bob Jones* case implausible and complained that the court was guilty of an "impermissible intrusion into, and weighing of, Catholic doctrine." The court's decision was "tantamount to ordering a private actor to embrace the ideology of another. I cannot concur in this bizarre result."

Just how far the Federal courts want to travel down this road remains to be seen—Federally mandated ordination of women? (Sweden's already there.) Court reversals of excommunications? Court-ordered access to the pulpit and seminary for heretics, homosexuals, and apostates? Perhaps it is time for Sonia Johnson—the feminist booted out of the Mormon Church—to sue for reinstatement. We can think of at least two judges who are ready to go to bat for her. If only she were a lesbian.

*The cultural alienation of the press* was recently seen in its least flattering light, when the Associated Press distributed a picture of a grief-stricken father beside the body of his drowned five-year-old son. Originally published in the *Bakersfield Californian*, the picture provoked a storm of local outrage: within two days 500 people had called to protest the paper's exploitation of private anguish. One caller threatened to bomb the editorial offices. Bob Bentley, the editor who decided to use the photo, now feels he made a mistake. (Indifferent to community values, the Associated Press naturally does not see the problem.) Bentley confessed at length to Bob Greene of the *Chicago Tribune*:

> Most people were very upset that we had invaded the family's privacy. . . . I now think it was a mistake to do it. . . . To me this is the strongest validation I've ever seen that newspapers are out of touch with their readers. . . . By running that picture we alienated the hell out of our readers, and if we don't respond to that, we're stupid.

Bentley has shown his understanding of reader alienation by writing an apology "to all readers who were offended." He also demonstrated his awareness of the press's alienation—by nominating his grisly cheap shot for a Pulitzer Prize. cc



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Black and White—and Red All Over

Don't look for it at the corner newsstand or in the promotionals from Publisher's Clearing House. Except for professional Soviet watchers, few Americans even know of the existence of *Culture and Life*, an "illustrated monthly magazine of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries," published in English, Russian, French, Spanish, and German at the Izvestia Printing Works. Founded in 1957, *C&L* promotes international appreciation for the strength and vitality of Russian culture. Or at least tries to. If Soviet weaponry were on a par with their publishing, we could forget all about star wars.

Technically, the magazine is primitive. While most American presses long ago converted to offset technology, *C&L* is still stuck with the same letterpress techniques they began with 37 years ago. The type is dirty, uneven, and often broken. Photos —mostly black and white, with a few color—are cloudy, with no better than newspaper resolution. Screens are ill-aligned, and the proofreaders deserve (and may get) 10 years in Siberia. The text abounds with hilarious violations of English diction, syntax, and idiom. "The bright gifts of Yuri Tynyanov were a display of his entity and lively interest in the culture of the new Soviet society," we are told, while "transferring the arms race into outer space is something between a Sword of Damocles and a Pandora Case." A sociologist shares "his ideas about a research" in which "we offered women to evaluate the behavior and way of life to their husbands." If we begin to suffer anxieties under these assaults on our language, never fear: the work of a leading Soviet painter caresses us with details that "rock you to sleep like sea waves, and we gradually lose the idea about the reality of our bearings."

The reader's "idea about the reality of our bearings" does not grow much steadier when he attends to the themes which govern *C&L*'s pages. In a typical article, "The world must remember its saviours," Vasily Morozov, "military observer at the Novosti Press Agency and recipient of the USSR State Prize," sets the record straight on his country's role in Eastern Europe:

> The liberation of a number of European and Asian countries by the Soviet Armed Forces, and the temporary presence of Soviet troops in their countries had nothing to do with the "exporting" of the socialist system. It simply provided more favourable opportunities for truly democratic developments. The people's democratic and socialist revolutions in those countries were prepared by their internal situation. They were not "imported" on the bayonets of the Soviet troops, as Western bourgeois historiography and propaganda have been trying to prove. When we explore the prerequisites for the revolutions in the liberated countries we must always stick to historic truth.

No doubt it is a dogged determination to stick to historic truth that prompts the editor of a Polish magazine to tell *C&L* that despite unnamed "difficult problems," Poland will remain "a reliable friend and ally of the Soviet Union." "Only in the family of the socialist community nations," he avers, "can we live and develop as a nation, which is totally sovereign, with the guaranteed inviability of our frontiers." Since this comment was made in the presence of editors from Hungary and Czechoslovakia, his point is clear.

Other contributors—who all write in a tone of unrelenting earnestness, without the slightest hint of irony or playfulness—are likewise eager to tell us of the marvels of the Soviet world. One hails "the steady growth of well being" enjoyed by the average Soviet family of four (why, they have a *three*-room apartment and are even *saving* towards a car!), while a second lauds the humane and ecologically sensitive oil communities of Siberia. A third writer interviews a poet and a composer who pooled talents to produce the inspiring song *Cowards Do Not Play Hockey!* Elsewhere in these pages we find a portrait of the achievements of an Estonian singer who "won great popularity with his Blind Musician devoted to three famous singers: Ray Charles, Jose Feliciano and Stevie Wonder" (all of apparently unknown nationality).

Here and there they do concede that *everything* in Russia is not perfect, at least not yet. A Soviet economist admits that love of work is not yet "a norma for every individual in this country" and that the Soviets do "lag behind the USA in such spheres as per capita consumption." But he is quick to add that socialism is uniquely suited for raising "the importance of labour in the scale of value" and to explain away the absence of consumer goods by pointing to "the initially low economic level of pre-revolutionary Russia and the ravages of two wars." In another article—surely the best in the magazine—a Party demographer concedes that "divorce is on the upsurge" and reports on research to solve the problem. His conclusions—which point the finger at the "negative character" of "a nagging wife"—should give food for thought for the many feminists in this country who have wedded their cause to the hard left:

> I do hope that the reader will not gather the impression that we are trying to blame only women for conflict situations in a family. . . . However, we would like to say to women, for



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they are the guards of a family hearth . . . don't you think you reproach men too often?
. . . Think, dear women, think.

But promoting domestic bliss by putting women in their place is a secondary consideration for *C&L*. Feature after feature stresses the dedication of Soviet scientists, artists, writers, and statesmen to "the struggle fot peace." According to *C&L*, people around the world are becoming "increasingly convinced that the USSR is honestly dedicated to the cause of peace." The Afghans, the reader is informed, especially understand this devotion because of the 25 years of service rendered by the Soviet Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Afghanistan. Lately, the "comprehensive activities" of this Society "have been raised to a considerably higher level than before." The editors offer no reason for this increased activity, but they point with pride to the establishment of the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Prizes in 1981, "a memorable event for cultural contacts" between the two countries. Be assured that in Afghanistan, "the Society will go on strengthening the effort for peace." Peace at *any* price.

The chief barriers to global serenity, it seems, are in the West. The United States—land of widespread poverty, unemployment, and capitalist exploitation—is the chief culprit. Singled out for censure is the American "star duels" technology being developed by men "compared to whom the Hitlers and Eichmanns, and the rest of the butchers of the Third Reich appear to be just white-winged angels." A leading Soviet scientist warns *C&L* readers that because of "the arms race imposed by the imperialists," we are on the brink of "a mass annihilation of human race [sic], an irreparable damage to the coming generations."

Alas, "the West deliberately brainwashes people" by distorting "the true intentions" of peace-loving Russia. And who, after all, can really believe in "Western freedom and democracy" after seeing that "peace demonstrators are arrested in West Germany"? Things are *so* bad in the West that *C&L* can find evidence of Western discontent and injustice in "even the most biased bourgeois newspapers" and in official U.S. government sources. (Where are the CIA censors when we need them?) Those tired of Western brainwashing may write for a subscription to 13/15 Sapunova Proyezd, 103674 Moscow-Centre, GSP-2, USSR. Hurry! It's not too late to order the perfect Christmas gift for all your favorite people: William Sloan Coffin, George Kennan, Teddy Kennedy, Alexander Cockburn, Jesse Jackson. The list is as long as the bow they draw when they're talking about their favorite country. cc

# VITAL SIGNS

## ART

## The Celebration of Chagall

*by Shehbaz H. Safrani*

Whimsy—clumsy or fantastic—fills the minds of those viewing the art of Marc Chagall. Two hundred oil paintings, gouaches, etchings, stained glass, and theater designs, chosen for their quality and their significance in the artist's career, drawn from public and private collections throughout the world (including generous loans from the artist's family), were on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from May 12 to July 21.

"The response to the exhibition has been extraordinary. So many people are coming to share in Chagall's celebration of life and love, making the exhibition truly a tribute to him. We are only sorry that he did not live to see this wonderful outpouring of interest in the United States," commented Anne d'Harnoncourt, director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. "It is unlikely that an exhibition such as this can be mounted again in our lifetime, so we are pleased that the museums and individuals around the world who have lent to the exhibition are permitting us to keep their works of art two weeks longer." The first Chagall retrospective to be mounted in the United States in nearly four decades, the exhibition was organized by the British scholar Susan Compton, a specialist in Russian 20th-century art and theater design for the Royal Academy of Arts in London and for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Philanthropic support came from the Pew Memorial Trust, the Bohen Foundation, Pincus Brothers Maxwell, Inc., CIGNA Foundation, Knight Foundation, and the Federal Council of the Arts and Humanities. One hundred and thirty-six thousand people had already visited the exhibition by mid-June.

Chagall died in March of this year at the age of 97 at his home in southern France. He was the last member of that remarkable generation of artists who early in this century shaped our concept of modern art. France, and in particular, southern France, attracted some of the most creative minds of our age. A few of them, like Chagall, retained a residual yearning to return to their birthplace. During the twilight years, human beings turn their glances homeward. And the work of Chagall is best appreciated against the backdrop of his native Russia, where brutal treatment of Jews has long been the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

norm.

Born in Vitebsk, Russia, in 1887 of a Hassidic Jewish family, Chagall spent most of his life in France. But Jewish traditions and symbols, Russian icons and folk art, and memories of traditional village life filled his imagination and set him apart from the modern European artists he met in Paris. Anti-Semitic persecution in Russia has taken many forms, all of them vicious, but for Chagall the grief of being separated from his native country remained with him to the end. Visually, much of this sadness, intermingled with a riot of color, dazzling forms, topsy-turvy figures, is there for any viewer to see. Along with this profound sense of loss is Chagall's child-like anticipation of a return.

Yet, in most of his works, Chagall brought a sense of conviction, a strong belief that no matter what ideology prevailed in his beloved Russia, none could rob him of his memories. In a sense, the Chagall imagery can be considered the reverse of the world conceived by Franz Kafka. Chagall's metaphors—whether or not Andre Breton is correct in linking them with surrealism—do not haunt us like those conjured in "Metamorphosis," *The Trial*, or "The Judgment." That Chagall turned trauma and tragedy into a personal triumph is a feat worthy of the noblest ideals of Western man.

While looking at the works of Chagall, the viewer may be reminded of Longfellow's *The Slave's Dream*: "Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep / He saw his Native Land." Love is seldom an opiate, and whatever happens to any country, some of its sons remain proud and loyal to the end. Thus, Chagall celebrated his love for Russia and Russian Jewry throughout his prolific life. Lyrical in feeling, Chagall's work poetically blends layers of reality and illusion. "For the Cubists," Chagall once wrote, "a painting was a surface covered with forms in a certain order. For me a picture is a surface covered with representations of things (objects, animals, human beings) in a certain order in which logic and illustration have no importance. The visual effect of the composition is what is paramount."

The Philadelphia exhibition was wisely arranged to allow viewers to trace Chagall's career from the early years at St. Petersburg to his final creations in southern France. The show began with a group of early works painted in Russia and included several of his celebrated paintings created in Paris before World War I. It is in these works that Chagall displays with brilliant color his synthesis of Russian imagery and Cubist structure. Also represented were the imaginative fantasies in a broader style which Chagall invented in mid-life as he explored the techniques and themes that defined the saga of his career. The later works on display included the paintings and stained-glass maquettes devoted to the "Biblical Message" that preoccupied Chagall beginning in the 1950's. The celebratory nature of Chagall's best-known work has often eclipsed the deeply moving reminders of war and suffering. The artist's response to human tragedy is revealed in his depictions of crucifixion, which Chagall sees as a symbol of great power for Christians and Jews alike.

Indicative of Chagall's love for ballet and theater were a series of watercolor studies, choreographic sketches, and a curious mask for a dancing bear. These marvelous works find their roots, I believe, in St. Petersburg. After all, it was in St. Petersburg that Chagall had two teachers who were designers—one for Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, the other for experimental plays. And in the same great Russian city his fiancée, Bella Rosenfeld, studied acting.

Chagall's later involvement in Russian and Jewish avant-garde circles led to commissions for such theaters as the Hermitage Studio in St. Petersburg, the Theater of Revolutionary Satire in Vitebsk (founded with Chagall's assistance in 1919), and the Jewish State Kamerny Theater (founded in Moscow in 1920). Nontraditional in his approach to theater design as he was in his painting, Chagall incorporated folklore, Jewish symbols, farm animals, and upside-down figures in his backdrops and in the monumental canvases he painted for the foyer of the Jewish State Kamerny Theater. "Chagall's paintings," Zubin Mehta (conductor of the Israeli and the New York Philharmonic) said, "are beautiful. 'The cow's jumping over the moon.'"

It was for the Ballet Theater of New York that Chagall did his first work in ballet, when in 1942 he designed the sets and costumes for *Aleko*. First produced in Mexico City, *Aleko* was set to music by Tchaikovsky on a story based on a poem by Pushkin, with choreography by Leonide Massine, also a Russian expatriate. Delighted with his commission and inspired by Russian memories, Chagall unleashed new energies. In the backdrop for Scene 3, *A Wheatfield on a Summer's Afternoon*, Chagall introduced two huge red suns blazing in a yellow sky above a wheatfield, from which emerge a scythe and a strange, fish-like creature. To the right, the hero Aleko rows a small boat. The ballet's final tragic scene was played against the backdrop *A Fantasy of St. Petersburg*. Here Chagall evokes the city, its statue of the Bronze Horseman clearly silhouetted against the sky, an allusion to Pushkin's famous poem of that title. A white horse springs across the night sky, its nose touching the light from a candelabrum which has apparently strayed from a St. Petersburg ballroom of Pushkin's era. In an interview at the time, Chagall explained his spare, dramatic approach: "I wanted to penetrate *Aleko* without illustrating it, without

### LIBERAL ARTS

*Not a Prayer*

The Rt. Reverend William H. Folwell, Episcopal bishop in Florida, is suing the U.S. Navy for $200,000. According to the *Washington Post*, Bishop Folwell claims to have injured his left knee while playing on tennis courts at the Naval Training Center in Orlando. The accident would not have occurred, he argues, had the Navy kept the courts properly cleared of algae. The injury constitutes a definite professional handicap, since he can no longer manage a proper genuflection.

But wait. The Navy is countersuing, arguing that the good bishop was actually a trespasser who regularly sneaked onto the courts in the early morning to avoid detection. Unpaid user fees, Navy officials claim, come to $5,200.

Being an Anglican, Folwell may offer to split the difference. cc



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

copying anything. I want the color to play and speak alone. There is no equivalence between the world in which we live and the world we enter in this way."

"It is Chagall who emerges as the hero of the evening," wrote the dance critic for the *New York Times* discussing the premiere of *Aleko*. "So exciting are [the backdrops] in their own right that more than once one wished all those people would quit getting in front of them." Lovers of the ballet will be thrilled to note that among Chagall's most famous stage sets still in use are those for Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird*, created in 1945. His murals and decorations for theaters included the ceiling of the Paris Opera in 1963 and the two huge paintings for the foyer of the Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center in New York City in 1966.

Solitude *by Marc Chagall; 1933; Oil on canvas; 102cm × 169cm. Collection of the Tel Aviv Museum.*

Late in his life, Chagall embarked on a totally new creative endeavor—stained glass. This new initiative effected a spiritual confluence of his incredible energies. The religious paintings and prints—both of which Chagall had executed throughout his brilliant career—came together in stained glass. Working in collaboration with Charles Marq, a French artist who specializes in stained glass, Chagall brought a lifetime fascination with color relationships to this radiant, translucent medium. Chagall was 70 years old when he began to accept commissions in his new field. His stained-glass windows now illuminate religious and secular buildings around the world. His work in the private chapel of the Rockefellers at Pocantico Hills can be viewed year-round. Included in the Philadelphia retrospective were four sample sections for windows representing the 12 tribes of Israel commissioned by Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, for the synagogue attached to the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem.

In the Night *by Marc Chagall; 1943; Oil on canvas; 18½" 20⅝". Philadelphia Museum of Art: Louis E. Stern Collection.*

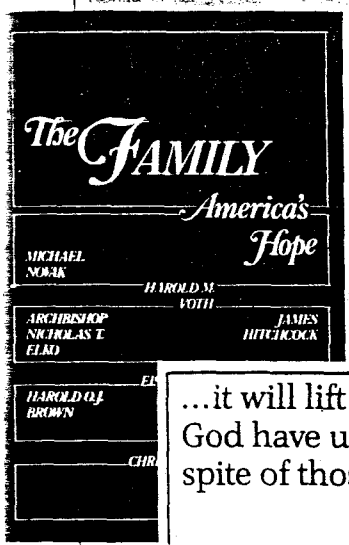
From the early experiments in color to the mature achievement in stained glass, the Philadelphia exhibition explored the full range of Chagall's long and fruitful career, reminding us in the process that through his jubilant fantasy, sly humor, and tragic drama, Chagall was true to himself, sincere in his feelings for Russia, and genuine in his concern for his people, the Jews. A lavishly illustrated catalogue, *Marc Chagall*, written by Dr. Susan Compton, is available for $12.95 (plus $2.50 for postage and handling) from the Museum Shop, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Parkway at 26th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19101. Telephone: (215) 763-8100. ∞

*Shehbaz Safrani is a writer and painter based in New York City.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"For intellectual and spiritual support and reinforcement, parents will want to read




# THE FAMILY

## AMERICA'S HOPE

...it will lift your spirits and strengthen your determination to fulfill the role you and God have undertaken together: that of being the best parents you can possibly be in spite of those who would destroy the foundation of Western civilization."

*—The Barbara M. Morris Report*

This book is designed to be of assistance to parents, teachers, counselors, clergy, legislators, social service agency personnel, and others whose responsibilities affect the well-being of the family.

Eminent spokesmen for the family review the primary functions of the family, examine circumstances which inhibit those functions, propose some actions for counteracting antifamily influences, and consider some of the ways in which religion may more effectively support the family.

- "The American Family, an Embattled Institution," by Michael Novak, author and resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.
- "The Role of the Family in Nurturing the Child for Responsible Adulthood," by Harold M. Voth, M.D., senior psychiatrist and psychoanalyst at the Menninger Foundation
- "The Family as a Stabilizing Force in the Life of an Adult," by James Hitchcock, Catholic social critic and professor of history at St. Louis University
- "Modern Culture and the Norms for Intimate Relationships," by the late Leopold Tyrmand, former vice president of The Rockford Institute
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Jewish Commentary*," by Mayer Eisenstein, M.D., a Chicago physician, vice chairman of the American College of Home Obstetrics, and on the Council for Jewish Elderly
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Catholic Commentary*," by Archbishop Nicholas T. Elko, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Mormon Commentary*," by Joe J. Christensen, president of Ricks College and former Director of Seminaries and Institutes Worldwide of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- "Religion in Support of the Family—*A Protestant Commentary*," by Harold O.J. Brown, chairman of the department of theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
- "Upholding the Principles of Family Solidarity in an Adversary Culture," by John A. Howard, president of The Rockford Institute

**$4.00** ($2.50 each, 10 or more)
Published by The Rockford Institute

---

## THE FAMILY: AMERICA'S HOPE
## ORDER FORM

☐ Please send me _____ copy(s) of *The Family: America's Hope* at $4.00 plus 50¢ postage & handling each (10 or more, $2.50 each).

☐ Please send me more information about The Rockford Institute.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State/Zip_____

Quantity ordered _____

Amount $_____

Postage & handling $_____

TOTAL $_____

Please make check or money order payable to The Rockford Institute. ***U.S. Funds Only.***

F85/1

*The Rockford Institute • 934 North Main Street • Rockford, Illinois 61103*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED